

COUNTRY NOTES



—N passing through Tavistock some time ago our attention was directed to the immense increase in the rent of the cottages sold a couple of years ago by the Duke of Bedford. After applying in the proper quarter for information we received the following authoritative statement: "His Grace owned about 180 cottages in the town of Tavistock, nearly the whole of which were sold at a sale two years ago. The rents charged for these cottages were 1s. 6d. and 1s. 9d. a week for all except one lot, where the rent was 2s. a week. The cottages, though not modern structures, were all very substantially built, with w.c. and large garden and a small outhouse to each. The tenants paid the rates, except the rate for water, which was supplied to them free, as His Grace owned the town water works. Since the sale the rents have been raised from 1s. 6d. and 1s. 9d. to 3s. and 3s. 6d., and in some cases to 4s., and in the case of the 2s. ones to 4s., and in a few cases to 5s. a week, and in every case the tenant, instead of having the water free, has now to pay the water rate of 5s. a year. I cannot tell you whether the new owners are putting any of the burden of repair on the tenants, but, of course, while the Duke of Bedford owned them all the repairs and painting were done by His Grace, and we found on an average that these cottages cost about one year's rent in five to keep in repair and painting. In several cases the tenants bought the cottages they occupied. In the sale the cottages fetched from £100 to £150, according to position and locality, but the bulk of them fetched under £120."

Comment on our part is unnecessary. But we should very much like to hear what men like Mr. F. E. Green have to say. They go about the country attributing every sign of poverty and every hardship incidental to "poorish cauld" to the tyranny of great landlords. Those who have taken the trouble to ascertain the truth of the matter know that the rack renter, who is only a rent receiver, is the little owner. Where he exists in numbers there the slums are. Tavistock was no exception to the general rule. The same change has taken place at Thorney, where rents have increased 75 per cent. to 100 per cent., and in some cases over 100 per cent. When the cottagers come to realise the exact character of the changes that are being brought about they will be less inclined to welcome the mischief-makers whose ardour threatens ruin.

When this number is published we shall have entered upon the merry month of May, and in the right optimistic spirit we all trust and believe that it will bring sunshine and flowers. April has done its proverbial part by providing a bountiful supply of showers—not scanty ten-minute sunny showers, but a course of thorough drenching, half-day downpours. Luckily, the rain has been accompanied by a very mild temperature, and things in field and garden are looking as promising now as they could possibly be. The pears and plums are in the last stage of bloom, and it is fondly hoped that for once they have escaped injury by frost. In this connection attention may be directed to a very important paragraph in the Gardening section of the paper, which shows that much of the injury which we have been in the habit of attributing to early frost is really caused by a bacillus. Apples, which form the most trustworthy crop of the fruit-grower, have not yet come into

bloom. They received a salutary check from the cold east winds that prevailed in late March and early April. Gardeners have a tradition that frost is bound to occur on May 8th or 9th, and that if the apple-blossom escapes that it is safe for the year. On this occasion the flowers in many districts will not be sufficiently developed for the frost to get at them.

May is a month that tempts the wanderer abroad, and mingled with the elation natural to the moment there is always a certain amount of apprehension among those who are solicitous for the preservation of all that is beautiful in country life, animal or vegetable. While the Nature-lover meanders by the silvery stream listening to the nightingale or watching the flowers blow, the collector of eggs and the flower thief also steal slyly forth on their dark adventures. In other parts of the paper will be found warnings and exhortations directed against the unscrupulous egg-collector by Mr. Edmund Selous and others, and Mr. Gathorne Hardy has been giving a timely warning to the depredators who uproot common flowers like the violet, the primrose and the bluebell, or gather rare plants for sale. If those who went to the country confined themselves to making nose-gays, no harm would be done, as the majority of plants flower all the more freely for having their blossoms plucked. It is the man with the spud who has to be guarded against.

WHEN MOTHER SINGS.

When mother sings
You think of fire-lit nurseries
And pussy-cats and things,
And all the toys and chocolates
That Father Christmas brings.

When Mother sings
You hear the door move softly,
And with fluttering of wings
The angels that you left in church
Troop in and tell you things.

When Mother sings
You shut your eyes and think of—
Oh, lots of lovely things!
Of sounds that feel like flowers,
And stars that fade and glow,
And colours singing dreamily
That curtsy as they go.
But suddenly, when happiest,
You hear the music cry,
And all the world is loneliness,
Just mountains and the sky.
A singing voice from hill to hill
Goes higher yet and higher,
And sadder yet and sadder, till . . .
You wish your eyes were drier.
You touch them with a finger-tip
And—"Oh, my little son!
I forgot that you were near me.
Oh, what has Mother done?"

ISABEL BUTCHART.

Sir Harry Johnston supplements the outcry against the robbery of birds' nests by the publication of a correspondence regarding the destruction of birds for their plumage. He says the evil is widespread. Eastern and Southern France, Italy, Algeria and the North of Tunis, the United States and British Columbia, Asia Minor and Northern Persia, and all the various parts of Australasia come under his ban as places where birds are slain for their plumage. In France and Italy small birds, even swallows and martins, warblers, wagtails and other migrants are killed for eating purposes, owing to the high price of food; but this is a different matter. It is not likely that Sir Harry Johnston will gain his end by arguing with the Plumage Committee of the Textile Trade Section of the London Chamber of Commerce. The people to be convinced are those who set the fashion and follow it. After all, it is a survival of barbarism for women to deck themselves out with the feathers of dead birds. By doing so they demonstrate that there is no such immense gulf as might appear between the lady who walks down Piccadilly with a large feather waving at the top of her hat and the women of the South Sea Islands who bedeck themselves with bright little glass beads and pieces of coloured metal.

In the various forecasts of the cricket season, which will begin in earnest next week, there is agreement upon one point: the majority of the county clubs are short of funds. This may be ascribed to many causes, but the immediate one is that last year was so cold and wet that spectators could not be

induced to attend the matches in any large numbers. Moreover, the cricket itself suffered in quality, and in many cases was scarcely worth seeing. But there are pessimists who go further and assert that a permanent falling off in gate-money is sure to result because of the decay in the spectacular attraction of cricket. Various experiments are to be tried to combat the public indifference. Some hold that shorter games prove more attractive, others that matches started on Saturdays would be popular among those who have a half-holiday. This may help to mitigate the loss of gate-money, but will not affect the fact; people have so many other pleasant occupations for their leisure hours in summer that they really have not time to watch a cricket match from opening to finish. And the cricketers take their game so very seriously, playing as though everything depended on their winning and nothing on the fineness and beauty of the individual strokes, that a long innings is often dull and boring to tears.

Ever more serious is the emigration from Scotland. Last week all the records were broken. The Allan liner *Grampian* carried 1,700 emigrants for Quebec and Montreal, the largest number ever carried by one Clyde steamer. In addition to the *Grampian*, the Donaldson liner *Saturnia* took 1,250 for Montreal and the Anchor liner *California* 1,280 for New York. The grand total was 4,230, which is a record for the Clyde. Patriotic Scotsmen cannot help regarding this movement with grave uneasiness. It is denuding the country of its best citizens. The matter, in fact, is becoming so very serious as to call for thorough enquiry. Commissions recently have been appointed on such small pretext that one is loth to suggest another; but it is surely of great importance that investigation should be made into the conditions of life, both in the Scottish towns and in the rural districts, in order to ascertain the reasons for this migration. In England it is often said that the housing accommodation is at fault; but a Scottish correspondent, at the very moment while this is being written, sends us examples of the extraordinarily low rents which are customary.

At the commencement of the week the Ghent Exhibition was opened by the King of the Belgians, and Great Britain again scored a brilliant success, as at Brussels, for the British Section was near to completion, while most of the rest of the exhibition was still in the unplastered framework stage and sans exhibits. For the British triumph Mr. U. F. Wintour, the director of the section, deserves much congratulation, as the Belgian general strike has greatly increased exhibitors' difficulties, and the trade boom at home has caused such a pressure of work that many firms could not spare the time, men and shop-space required to prepare an adequate exhibit. An interesting fact, the demonstration of which will be new to many visitors, is the way England leads in the manufacture of cinematograph apparatus, lanterns and cameras; the fine exhibits of this trade are to be seen round the walls of the Machinery Hall. Nor must the Post Office exhibit be left unnoted, for in it the latest forms of tube-carriers, electrical appliances and much other apparatus may be seen; also a fine red double pillar-box of the type we know so well, which justifies its blatancy by its practical and workmanlike design, and its fitness for the purpose for which it was made.

The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries have the place of honour in the third hall of the British Section. The chief exhibits are a series related to trawling, but our agricultural and stock-breeding activities are also represented. Perhaps the cases which make the greatest appeal to the imagination are those shown in the Tropical Diseases Section. Here may be seen some evidence of the heroic fight that men of science are making against bubonic plague, cholera, elephantiasis, sleeping sickness and other spirochaete diseases.

A census of birds, which has lately been taken by one of our contemporaries—it is to be noted, however, that the difficulty in making a census of such a shifting population at all exact is perhaps one that passes the wit of man to overcome—presents many interesting features, some that are quite satisfactory and some greatly to be regretted. For instance, it is matter for sincere regret that members of the swallow family, in its various branches, and especially that of the house-martins, are on the decrease. They are beautiful little birds, and beneficial to us by reason of the multitudes of insects which they consume. The evictions performed by the house-sparrow seem to be the main cause of their decrease. It is not unnatural to find diminished numbers of the heath-dwelling birds, such as the stonechat, whinchat, Dartford warbler and nightjar. That

would be accounted for sufficiently by the invasion of these wild places by the builder, the golfer and other agents of civilisation. On the other hand, it is pleasant to note an increase of many of the warbler family, and, above all, of that prima donna of the whole choir, the nightingale. The civilisation which is extending ornamental shrubberies is providing just the kind of lodging which this branch of the great avine family likes best.

On first glance at the map and at the political relations of countries, it hardly looks as if a war in South Africa were likely to have any very direct effect on the fortunes of a small district in Syria. Yet there is no question of that effect, and the manner in which it was produced is curious. In the Boer War many of our soldiers acquired a liking for the native-grown tobacco, which was all that they were able to procure there, and since the supply was small a demand arose for some tobacco like it. For years, tobacco of a dark colour and rather a peculiar flavour had been grown around Latakia, on the Syrian coast, but the taste for it seemed to have died down; there was little sale for it, and by degrees the cultivation of the plant was abandoned. Merchants were left with much of it on their hands. When the fashion arose for the Boer tobacco it was suggested that this Latakia had a sufficiently similar flavour to fill the bill. It was, therefore, brought out, was bought up and appreciated, and the new demand has had the result of setting the industry on its feet again, and much of this tobacco is now being grown, as of old, in the Latakia district.

PRIMULAS AND PRIMROSES.

Pale mauve, snowflake white, satin rose,
These are screened out of warfare with woes—
No pain for the fine-powdered cheek!
No wind—though the east breath is bleak!
They stand, each sedate and aloof,
Ranked under their mimic sky-roof,
Each dreaming, mayhap, of a life,
Far hence—and a home, and a strife—
Jungle-glade, or the high mountain-pass!
But *here*—they are caged under glass,
And only the honey-scent tells
They are kin to our tribe of the dells,
Wild darlings, and born to a wrestle,
Dear wildings, so ready to nestle
Where steep, rugged braes lend a hold
To low tufts and crown-clusters of gold;
Or with mute frolic laughter invading
The rough bramble's fierce palisading,
Or tumbling, sun-cataracts, down
Towards the rain-flooded river, mud-brown,
Dear primroses, taking your chances,
How winsome and welcome your glances!
And who would a moment surrender
Your pixy-troop, tiny and tender,
For all these Court-dames in full splendour?

AGNES S. FALCONER.

With the great wealth of hardy flowers that graces our out-door gardens in spring, there is some danger of the old-fashioned but charming auricula being neglected. Long years ago it was considered the *doyen* of spring flowers, and wonderful methods were adopted by gardeners to bring it to perfection. Weird mixtures of soils and manures were considered essential to its well-being, and the man who could grow the best auriculas was considered a prince among his fellows. Judging by the interest taken in the beautiful plants shown at the Royal Horticultural Society's meeting on Tuesday last, the auricula is regaining some, at least, of its erstwhile popularity. This is probably due in large measure to the improvements that have been effected in the border varieties, plants that can be grown and flowered in the open garden without fear of excessive damage to their blooms. Although these border auriculas have not the same symmetrical outline and farina-coated leaves and stems of the show kinds, they are very beautiful and fragrant, and impart a warm, quiet tone to the outdoor garden such as no other hardy plant is capable of.

According to the law there are nowadays no deer in the New Forest. They were all abolished by the Deer Removal Act many years ago. It appears, however, that in despite of Parliamentary abolition a remnant of these hardy outlaws persist in inhabiting that Forest which has for many centuries been new, and even have the audacity to increase and multiply; for, as we are informed, they have been making themselves

troublesome of late by the numbers in which they invade agricultural land and gardens in search of food. It is the old story, that it is very difficult to kill "the last rabbit." A piquancy is added to the situation by the fact that the keepers, in these days of law-abiding Hampshire men, seem to have lost an art which was at one time more well known than it ought to have

been in that county—the art of snaring the deer. They are said to be now making application for lessons in this craft, to some of the old poachers, who, in their youth, used to pursue it with much profit, but whose source of livelihood has been stopped by the same keepers who are now asking for lessons in the very line of study they have condemned.

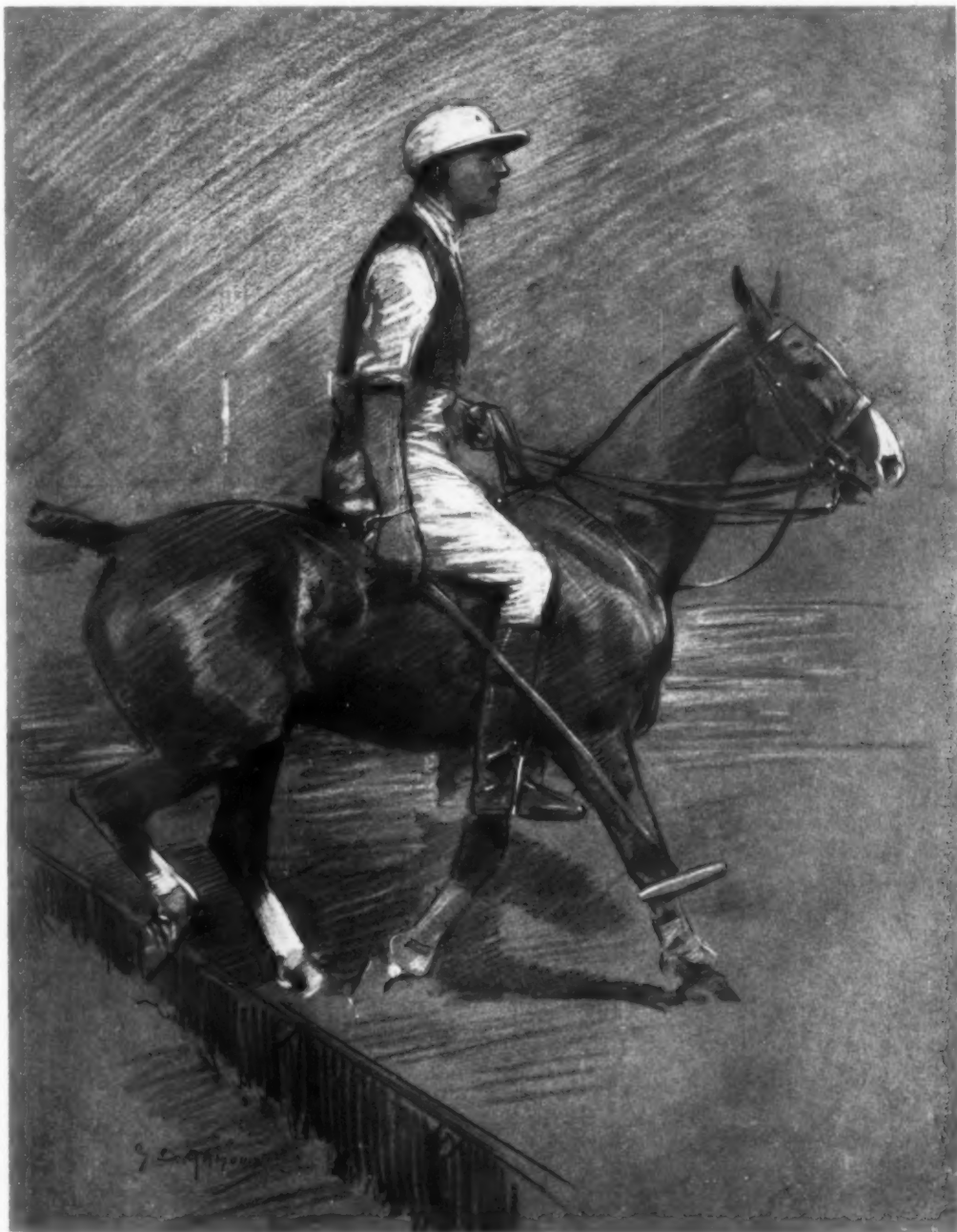
PONIES & PLAYERS FOR AMERICA.

THERE will be no question about any inferiority in ponies on the English side this time. Our photographs of the ponies which are to-day embarking for America prove it. The combined public spirit and judgment of the Duke of Westminster, Mr. Freake, Mr. Buckmaster and Captain Miller have assembled together such a collection of polo ponies as has never been seen before. Take the ponies as depicted here as a whole, we shall not fail to note the family likeness which runs through them. All in common have the fine forehead, the depth of girth, the power over the back and loins which give a pony the ability to turn and the balance so necessary in the modern game. That they have pace is shown us by two things: First, the blood and quality which is invariably stamped on them and, secondly, the fact of their being included in their present stable. Many ponies have passed through the Eaton stable and have been found wanting.

Those only with the polo temperament have been permitted to remain. Ireland, England and Australia have been drawn upon. There is another point which will strike the observer—these ponies are as fit as good stable management, when it is combined with judicious work, can make them. The American team now practising have the choice of the pick of the ponies in that country, but I am sure that if they beat us it will be because they are better players and not because they own and ride faster, quicker, handier ponies. It would be difficult to show better animals than these in any class of light horses, and yet it is not the first time that England has produced incomparable horses of this type and size. If my reader will turn back to any series of old portraits of English running horses, for example, those in Mr. T. A. Cook's "History of the English Turf," he cannot fail to be struck with the similarity of type between the six ponies Energy, Crocus, Tiger, Polestar, Harkaway, Kilkenny, and those old-time race-horses. Like causes produce like effects, and the thorough-bred or Arab and pony blood produce now, as they did then, these fine sorts of small horses.

We are, however, reminded of the fact that but too few of these ponies are to be found. It has taken three years and much expenditure of trouble and money to get together forty ponies of this high quality, and even then we have had to draw on Australia for two or three to make up the number. My own experience, which will be confirmed by the 4th Dragoon Guards and other well-known polo-playing regiments which have played in India and South Africa, is that, out of England, the Australian makes, of all others, the best polo pony. If ponies were bred and selected in the Colony for polo qualities and temperament, I am convinced that they would be second to none. If she had more size, would there be, for example, a better-playing pony than Brownie, a "Waler" pony in the 4th Dragoon Guards' regimental team?

For the forthcoming Test Matches the American players will have no superiority in ponies. They have not, it is well known, carried off any great prizes from the English Polo Pony market this time, and they have to depend on America for some of their ponies, supplemented, I believe, from Australia and the Argentine. One result of International polo is to stimulate pony-breeding in both countries, and the American players are waking up to the fact that while they have plenty of good foundation stock, notably their "quarter" horses, and some excellent



IMPRESSIONS OF THE PLAYERS AT EATON: THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER.

imported Welsh ponies, they have never tried to select and breed for polo qualities and temperament. I think, however, it will not be long before there is an American Polo Pony Stud Book, under the control of a strong breed society like our Polo and Riding Pony Society. In the meantime, the Americans have not the same resources as we have, nor, except in a few very remarkable cases, are their ponies at all equal to the English and Irish. The fact is that English polo pony-breeders have a great advantage in their wide market, for we supply the Continent of Europe with polo ponies and the whole world with polo pony stallions. Thus we have every inducement to produce small horses of the right type.

Looked at from another point of view, this Eaton Stud is a remarkable example of English pony-breeding. There are seventeen typical pony portraits in *COUNTRY LIFE*, but I have had forty-two pictures to choose from, many of them ponies as good as, or it may be better than, those reproduced here. These pictures are selected to illustrate some points; but while they are chosen out of forty as good, the whole number represent a much larger number of ponies, only just not so suitable for tournament ponies in International polo, and give some idea of English resources in this class of horse. These forty-two ponies were bought not merely for show purposes or as general examples of the high-class polo pony, but to suit particular riders. The Duke of Westminster and Captain Miller knew, indeed, that they had to mount a team which consisted of fine horsemen; but the finest horsemen have their peculiarities, and the pony that suits one man will not suit another. I think, however, that modern polo has in one way made the selection of ponies an easier matter, because there is, owing to the freer and more flexible style of play now in vogue, less difference between the qualities required by ponies for different positions in the game. The pony that will play in one place will play in another, and No. 1 and No. 4 no longer require a different sort of pony. The problem nowadays is not to suit the ponies to their places, but to fit each rider with a pony whose style and pace fit in with the play of the man who rides him. In their practice the ponies were hardly able, until last Friday, to show the pace that was in them. On that day, however, a day or two of sun and dry weather had restored the turf at Eaton, and their great pace was shown. The ponies are just right in condition, full of healthy muscle and firm in flesh, yet not so completely wound

up as they can be. This is an error into which Captain Miller would not fall, for there is still the voyage and the final practice in America. But they showed clearly enough what a grand lot of galloping ponies they were; moreover, some for a longer and others for a shorter period, but all, more or less, have that experience of the game without which no man or pony ever reaches the first class.

I understand that the Americans also will have a thoroughly seasoned stable of ponies, and that many, if not most of them have played in previous International matches. A good polo

pony, like good wine, improves with time, within certain limits in both cases. Fitzpatrick, the American trainer, is putting his ponies through a thorough preparation; indeed, they are galloped, so it is said, like race-horses. I was so struck, as, indeed, everyone who has trained ponies must have been, with the condition of the American ponies in 1909 that I should certainly hesitate to doubt the value of Fitzpatrick's methods, yet I should certainly have thought twice before suggesting that polo ponies should do much galloping off the polo ground. In training I am a great believer in a gallop, for a purpose. Everyone knows that a gallop in a race often tunes a race-horse up far more than one on a training ground. I dislike to see hunters galloped except out hunting, and polo ponies except on the polo ground; but possibly this may be only prejudice, and that a few good, sharp, short-distance gallops are useful to put the final polish of condition on to the ponies. I quite believe in teaching young ponies to gallop, but older ponies I am doubtful about. However, the American system was right for them and their ponies, and, maybe, it would be useful for ours. This is a matter of importance to all polo players, for it is quite clear that in the future the con-



IMPRESSIONS OF THE PLAYERS: CAPTAIN RITSON.

dition of ponies will play a great part in the fortunes of the game. But Captain Miller's 17th Lancers and Rugby experience must make him well able to judge how far the American system is better than our own.

THE ENGLISH TEAM.

There have been three noteworthy practice matches up to the time of writing, and the English team are clearly a very strong one. Mr. Buckmaster has not yet entirely recovered from his fall, and has very wisely not done more than was necessary to keep his men together. Two points, however, stand out in these practice matches; one is the excellent

combination of Mr. Buckmaster and Captain Leslie Cheape in defence. The necessity of sparing Mr. Buckmaster has held Captain Cheape back, as it were, and it was only on one occasion towards the close of Friday's match that the back felt himself free to come right through his men to make a goal. The two forwards, Captain Ritson and Mr. Edwards, have been steadily growing in the estimation of judges of the game. Both of them are at their best at high pressure. The faster the ball travels, the better do Captain Ritson and Mr. Edwards play. The first-named is not surpassed by any player of the day in control of the ball and resource. Last Friday he played with the following side: The Duke of Westminster, Mr. R. Grenfell, Captain Ritson and Lord Rocksavage. The opposing team consisted of Captain E. D. Miller, Mr. A. Edwards, Mr. Buckmaster and Captain Leslie Cheape. That Captain Ritson's team won by 8 goals to 3 was greatly due to his fine hitting and daring tactics. He was helped, it is true, by Mr. R. Grenfell's aptitude for accurate goal-hitting, but Captain Ritson did a great deal of work, and was untiring in his efforts and unfailing in the accurate calculation of his strokes. Towards the end of the game both sides put out their strength, and the pace was fast and the play



IMPRESSIONS OF THE PLAYERS: THE CAPTAIN (MR. BUCKMASTER).

even. Earlier in the week the whole English side, as Mr. Buckmaster is said to intend to put it into the field, came out. Captain Ritson, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Buckmaster and Captain Leslie Cheape were defeated by a strong scratch team. To all appearance they quite failed to stay, but in all probability



PONIES AT EATON: WAITING THEIR TURN.

Mr. Buckmaster felt the wisdom of taking things easily, and, since victory was of no consequence, held his hand. I do not think that any inferences can be drawn from matches played on grounds in such bad condition. If all goes well, however, it is not too soon to prophesy a very close struggle and a victory for the English side. The English team is certainly as strong

as the American in forward play, and, if anything, stronger in its back and half-back. I do not underrate Mr. H. P. Whitney, but Mr. Buckmaster is perhaps the finest No. 3 that is playing or ever has played at polo. On one point only there is room for doubt, and it is an important one. I think there never have been such stickers at goal as the American players



ENERGY.

Irish mare; heavy weight prize winner. In make and shape this pony is a standard pattern for polo. Note the fine forchard, the shoulders, the back and loins, and the length and spring of the neck from the shoulders.



TIGER.

Same type, more character, with depth through the heart, powerful back, loins and quarters. A weight carrier, with quality and balance. A hard, bold pony, with pace and courage and staying power.



CROCUS

Mare with great power and scope. Same type as above. The fine forchard, length of rein, depth through the heart and strong back and loins very notable.



HARKAWAY.

Another of same type, with more quality, if possible, and equal power to gallop under a fair weight.



KILKENNY.

W. A. Rouch. Almost an ideal polo pony. The perfection of power and pace in a small compass. A true pony head and expression.



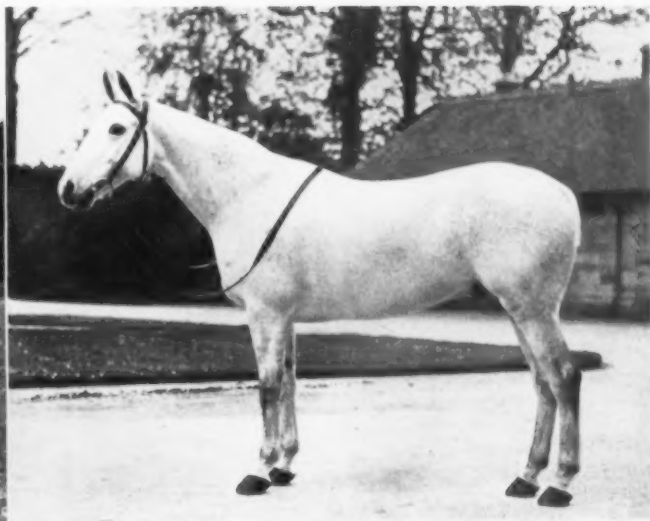
POLESTAR.

Copyright. A keen, active variation of the same type. Should turn well and be quick into its stride, be a hard pony and a slayer.



SPRITE.

First prize light-weight. Recalls the famous Mademoiselle. Is a very beautiful pony, and a very fine ride and fast. Much pony character behind the saddle.



PRETTY BOY.

The polo temperament embodied. A real pony, good at all points and a charming ride in or out of the game.



UNKNOWN.

Great power, depth of girth, sensible head, long forearm and short cannon. Carries the saddle in the right place, and is of true blood hunter type.



MIDGE.

Another type, but perfect of her kind. A pony in character and activity; a horse in power and pace.



NUTMEG.

W. A. Rouch. A pony that knows its business. A smooth-striding, fast pony; not so handsome as some stable companions, but to be trusted in a game.



MASTER HORACE.

Copyright. An Australian, belonging to Captain Ritson; a pony of quality. All Indian and South African players know the virtues of the "Waler" in a game of polo.

in a fast game. On the other hand, we have a clear advantage in horsemanship. A better team of horsemen never rode on to a polo field. In another respect we are very strong, as I doubt if the reserve men on the other side are as good as Mr. F. M. Freake and Lord Wodehouse at their best. These players would be invaluable if one of the first team was stale or for any

reason obliged to stand down. Mr. Freake is a very hard-working player, with the gift of never being daunted by adverse fortune, and able to rise to the occasion in a losing game. We have seen Mr. Buckmaster and Mr. Freake bring off some of their finest combinations and greatest efforts when playing against an adverse score.



HIDDEN STAR.

A pony belonging to Mr. Freake. This pony and the next, Polly, are examples of blood ponies with quality and power and pace. Note the depth of girth and galloping qualities.



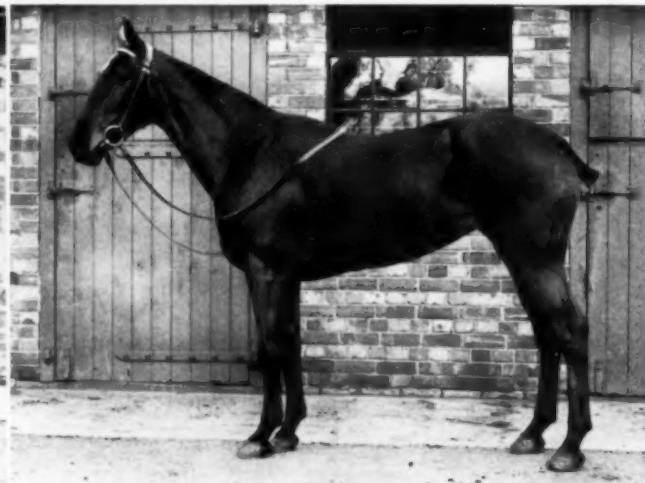
POLLY.

Mr. Freake, who has owned so many good ponies, has, it is well known, in these two as good as he has ridden. Polly and Hidden Star are of one pattern, a rare and fine one, the latter having, perhaps, the most power.



IRENE.

This and the following pony are the property of Mr. Buckmaster, and are much of the same type. Irene is full of quality.



PICCANINNY.

This is one of those sharp, well-balanced ponies Mr. Buckmaster likes, and of which even he cannot ask too much. Both are proved ponies.

THE AMERICAN PLAYERS.

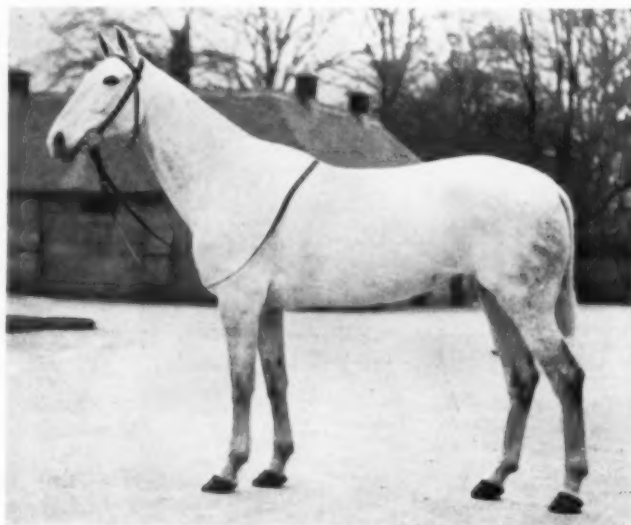
The American team will probably be the same which we have already seen, and they have been hard at work for some time playing with the reserve men, Mr. René La Montagne and Mr. L. Stoddard, and other notable players. I have seen Mr. Foxhall Keene mentioned, but there is no chance of his being included in the representative American team. He is a fine hitter and can put tremendous strength into his strokes, but he fits badly into a team, and, indeed, he belongs to the days when team play was not so important as it is now. The American team will, if there are no accidents, probably consist of the Messrs. Waterbury, Mr. H. P. Whitney and Mr. D. Milburn, with Messrs. Agassdy, La Montagne, Stoddard and, perhaps, Stevenson as reserve men. Mr. Stoddard played over here in 1909; he is a fine striker and quite up to International form. At present the American team are only playing pick-up games, and have not ranged their first team against other combinations. Practice and condition for men and ponies are their chief aim at present. X.

THE GOVERNING BODY OF POLO.

THE deputation from the County Polo Association, consisting of Mr. Buckmaster, Mr. Tresham Gilbey and Mr. Dunbar Kelly,

were received by the Hurlingham Committee at the Cavalry Club on Tuesday and promised to consider the views of the deputation, and there the matter ended for the present. Hurlingham could not be expected to answer offhand. Besides, there are the various views of its own members to consider; some would like things to remain as they are; others, recognising that this is impossible, are for partial recognition; such as, for example, allowing a wider representation of players and making the Polo Committee independent of the Club Committee. Then there are those within the club who think

that Hurlingham should meet the wishes of players (fully eighty per cent. desire the change) and present a complete and well-thought-out scheme for the acceptance of the County Polo Association. The first course is impossible, for no club in the position of Hurlingham could really stand out against so large a body of opinion. The second plan would not be accepted heartily by a large number of players and would hamper the development of the game. The last only would be likely to succeed, and it would then be possible, as it is certainly desirable, to retain the name of Hurlingham in the title of the Association. Most people desire the thing, but are not so anxious about the name. But those of us who have for many years had to do with polo do not desire to break with these honoured names and traditions.



W. A. Rouch.

SADIE.

Copyright. Captain Brassey's Sadie is here on her great merits as a playing pony; she is not without faults, to criticise, but can hardly do wrong in a game of polo.

NOTWITHSTANDING

by Mary
Cholmondeley.



CHAPTER XIX.

MR. STIRLING and his nephew were standing in the long shrouded gallery of Hulver Manor looking at Van der Myn's portrait of James Manvers, the Minister at the Hague in George I.'s time. The caretaker, who knew Mr. Stirling well, his last half-crown warm in her palm, had withdrawn to the hall.

If it is a misfortune to be stout, even if one is tall, and to be short, even if one is slim, and to be fifty, even if one is of a cheerful temperament, and to be bald, even if one has a well-shaped head, then Mr. Stirling, who was short and stout, and bald as well, and fifty into the bargain, was somewhat heavily handicapped as to his outer man. But one immense compensation was his for an unattractive personality. He never gave it a moment's thought, and consequently no one else did either. His body was no more than a travelling suit to him. It was hardy, durable, he was comfortable in it, grateful to it, on good terms with it, worked it hard, and used it to the uttermost. That it was not more ornamental than a Gladstone bag did not trouble him.

"I vow I will never come here again," he said, walking to the nearest window. "The whole place makes me miserable." The caretaker had unshuttered a few among the long line of windows, had pulled up the blinds, and of course pulled them up crooked, and the airlessness, the ghostly outlines of the muffled furniture, the dust that lay grey on everything, the sinister smell of dry rot, all struck at Mr. Stirling's sensitive spirit, and oppressed him.

"Put it in a book," said his nephew absently, a dreamy weak-looking youth, with projecting teeth, whose spectacled eyes were glued to the pictures. "Put it in a book, Uncle Reggie."

Mr. Stirling had long since ceased to be annoyed by a remark which is about as pleasant to a writer as a suggestion of embezzlement is to a bank manager.

"Have you seen enough, Geoff? Shall we go?" he said.

"Wait a bit. Where's the Raeburn?"

"Highland Mary? Sold. A pork butcher in America bought it."

"Sold! Good God!" said his nephew, staring horrorstruck at his uncle. "How awful. Pictures ought not to belong to individuals. The nation ought to have them." He seemed staggered. "Awful," he said again. "What a tragedy."

"To my mind *that* is more tragic," said Mr. Stirling bluntly, pointing to the window.

In the deserted garden near the sundial Janey was standing, a small nondescript figure in a mushroom hat, picking snapdragons. The garden had been allowed to run wild for lack of funds to keep it in order, and had become beautiful exceedingly in consequence. The rose-coloured snapdragons and amber lupins were struggling to hold their own in their stone-edged beds against an invasion of willow weed. A convolvulus had climbed to the sundial, wrapping it round and round, and had laid its bold white trumpet flowers on the leaded disc itself. Janey had not disturbed it. Perhaps she thought that no one but herself sought to see the time there. The snapdragons rose in a great blot of straggling rose and white and wine red round her feet. She was picking them slowly, as one whose mind was not following her hand. At a little distance Harry was lying at full length on the flags beside the round stone-edged fountain, blowing assiduously at a little boat which was refusing to cross. In the midst of the water Cellini's world-famous water-nymph reined in her dolphins.

A yellow stonecrop had found a foothold on the pedestal of the group, and flaunted its raw gold in the vivid sunshine amid the weather-bitten grey stone, making a fantastic broken reflection where Harry's boat rippled the water. And behind Janey's figure, and behind the reflection of the fountain in the water, was the cool sinister background of the circular yew hedge with the heather pink of the willow weed crowding up against it.

The young man gasped. "But it's—it's a picture," he said. And then after a moment he added, "Everything except the woman. Of course she won't do."

Geoff's curiously innocent, prominent eyes were fixed. His vacant face was rapt. His uncle looked sympathetically at him. He knew what it was to receive an idea "like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought."

The caretaker, whose tea time was already delayed, coughed discreetly in the hall.

"Come, Geoff," said Mr. Stirling, remorsefully but determinedly, taking his nephew's arm. "We can't remain here for ever."

"It's all right except the woman," said Geoff, not stirring. "Every scrap. It hits you in the eye. Look how the lichen has got at the dolphins. All splendour, and desolation, and the yew hedge like a funeral procession behind. Not a bit of sky above them; the only sky reflected in the water." His voice had sunk to a whisper.

"When you are my age," said Mr. Stirling, "it is just the woman, not some fanciful angel with a Grecian profile and abnormally long legs, but that particular little brown-haired creature with her short face whom you brush aside, who makes the tragedy of the picture. When I think of what that small courageous personage endures day by day, what her daily life must be—but what's the use of talking? Twenty can't hear a word fifty is saying, isn't meant to. Wake up, Geoff. There is another lady in the case. It is past the caretaker's tea time. You *must* learn to consider the fair sex, my dear boy. We are keeping her from her tea. Look, Miss Manvers has seen us. We'll join her in the gardens."

One of Mr. Stirling's pleasantest qualities was that he never remembered he was a man of letters. Consequently it was not necessary for him to show that he was still a boy at heart and that he could elaborately forget that he was a distinguished novelist by joining in sailing Harry's boat. Harry scrambled to his feet, and shook hands with both men at Janey's bidding, and then he looked wistfully at Geoff as a possible play-fellow, and smiled at him, an ingratiating smile. But Geoff at twenty, two years younger than Harry, Geoff the artist, the cultured enquirer after famous Raeburns, the appraiser of broken reflections and relative values, only gaped vacantly at him, hands in pockets, without seeing him.

Harry puffed out an enormous sigh, and looked back at his boat, and then he clapped his hands suddenly and ran to meet Annette, who was coming slowly towards them across the grass.

Mr. Stirling's eyes and Janey's followed him, and Mr. Stirling felt rather than saw that Janey winced as she looked gravely at the approaching figure.

Geoff's hat was at the back of his sugar-cone of a head. His mild face was transfixed. "Mrs. Le Geyt," he said, below his breath.

CHAPTER XX.

HALF-AN-HOUR later, when Annette had left them, Mr. Stirling and his nephew turned with Janey towards the tall Italian gates, which Harry was dutifully holding open for them. As Geoff stumbled beside him, glancing backwards in the direction of the path across the park which Annette had taken, Mr. Stirling half wished that his favourite sister's only child stared less at pretty women, that he had less tie and hair, and rather more backbone and deportment.

"Uncle Reggie," blurted out Geoff, "that Miss Georges!"

"Well?"

"Has she divorced him? Is that why she's called Miss Georges?"

"I suppose she's called Miss Georges for the same reason that you are called Geoffrey LeStrange," said his uncle; "because it happens to be her name."

"But she is Mrs. Le Geyt," continued Geoff, looking with wide-open, innocent eyes from his uncle to Janey. "Mrs. Dick Le Geyt. I know it. I knew her again directly I saw her when they were staying at Fontainebleau on their honeymoon. I've never forgotten her. I wanted to draw her. I thought of asking him if I might, but he was rather odd in his manner, and I didn't, and the next day he was ill and I went away. But they were down in the visitors' book as Mr. and Mrs. Le Geyt, and I heard him call her Annette, and—"

Mr. Stirling suddenly caught sight of Janey's face. It was crimson, startled, but something in it baffled him. It had become rigid. And he saw with amazement that it was not with horror or indignation, but as if one in torture, terrified at the vision, saw a horrible way of escape over a dead body.

"You are making a mistake, Geoff," he said, sternly. "You never get hold of the right end of any stick. You don't in the

least realise what you are saying, or that Mr. Le Geyt is Miss Manvers' brother."

"I only wish," said Janey, with dignity and with truth, "that my poor brother were married to Miss Georges. There is no one I should have liked better as a sister-in-law. But you are mistaken, Mr. Lestrangle, in thinking such a thing. To the best of my belief he is not married."

"They were at Fontainebleau together as husband and wife," said Geoff. "They really were. And she had a wedding-ring on. She has not got it on now. I looked, and—and—"

But Mr. Stirling swept him down. "That's enough. You must forgive him, Miss Manvers. He has mistaken his vocation. He ought not to be a painter, but a novelist. Fiction is evidently his forte. Good evening—good-bye, Harry. Thank you for opening the gate for us. We will take the short cut across the fields to Noyes. Good-bye. Good-bye."

And Mr. Stirling, holding Geoff by the elbow, walked him off rapidly down the lane.

"Uncle Reggie," said the boy, "I think I won't go to Japan to-morrow after all. I think I'll stop on here. I can get a room in the village, and make a picture of the fountain and the lichen and the willow weed, with Mrs. Le Geyt picking flowers. She's just what I want. I suppose there isn't any real chance of her being so kind as to stand for me, is there? She looks so very kind. In the nude, I mean. It's quite warm. But if she wouldn't consent to that, that gown she had on, that mixed colour, cobalt with crimson lake in it—"

"Called lilac for short," interpolated Mr. Stirling.

"It would be glorious against the yews, and knocking up against the grey stone, and that yellow lichen in the reflection. The whole thing would be stupendous. I see it." Geoff wrenched his elbow away from his uncle's grip and stopped short in the path, looking at Mr. Stirling—through him. "I see it," he said, and his pink, silly face became pale, dignified, transfigured.

Mr. Stirling's heart smote him. "Geoff," he said gently, taking his arm again and making him walk quietly on beside him. "Listen to me. There are other things in the world to be attended to besides pictures."

"No, there aren't."

"Yes, there are. I put it to you. You have made a statement about Miss Georges which will certainly do her a great deal of harm if it is repeated. You blurt out things about her which are tantamount to making a very serious accusation against her character, and then in the same breath you actually suggest that you should make use of her in your picture, when you have done your level best to injure her reputation. Now, as one man of the world to another, is that honourable, is it even 'cricket'?"

Geoff's face became weak and undecided again. The vision had been shattered.

Mr. Stirling saw his advantage, and pressed it with all the more determination because he perceived that Geoff at any rate was firmly convinced of the truth of what he had said, incredible as it seemed.

"You will take no rooms in this village," he said with decision, "and you will start for Japan to-morrow as arranged. I shall see you off, and before you go you will promise me on your oath never to say another word to anyone, be they who they may, about having seen Miss Georges at Fontainebleau, or any other 'bleau,' in that disreputable Dick Le Geyt's company."

Janey's heart beat violently as she walked slowly home. During the past few weeks she had sternly faced the fact that Roger was attracted by Annette, and not without many pangs had schooled herself to remain friends with her unconscious rival. There had been bitter moments when a choking jealousy had welled

up in her heart against Annette. She might have let Roger alone. Beautiful women always hypocritically pretended that they could not help alluring men. But they could. Annette need not have gratified her vanity by trying to enslave him.

But after the bitter moment Janey's sturdy rectitude and sense of justice always came to her rescue. "Annette has not tried," she would say stolidly to herself. "And why shouldn't she try if she likes him? I am not going to lose her if she does try. She doesn't know I want him. She is my friend, and I mean to keep her, whatever happens."

Whatever happens. But Janey had never dreamed of anything like this happening. As she walked slowly home with her bunch of snapdragons she realised that if Roger knew what she and Mr. Stirling knew about Annette—she would leave her. It was not too late yet. His mind was not actually made up, that slow mind, as tenacious as her own. He was gravitating towards Annette. But if she let it reach his ears that Annette had been Dick's mistress he would turn from her, and never think of her as a possible wife again. After an interval he would gradually revert to her, Janey, without having ever realised that he had left her. Oh! if only Roger had been present when that foolish young man had made those horrible allegations—if only he had heard them for himself! Janey reddened at her own cruelty, her own disloyalty.

But was it—could it be true that Annette, with her clear, unfathomable eyes, had an ugly past behind her? It was unthinkable. And yet—Janey had long since realised that Annette had a far wider experience of men and women than she had. How had she gained it, that experience, that air of mystery which, though Janey did not know it, was a more potent charm than her beauty? Was it possible that she might be Dick's wife after all, as that young man had evidently taken for granted? No. No wife, much less Annette, would have left her husband at death's door and have fled at the advent of his relations. His mistress might have acted like that, had actually acted like that, for Janey knew that when her aunt arrived at Fontainebleau a woman who till then had passed as Dick's wife and had nursed him devotedly had decamped and never been heard of again.

Was it possible that Annette had been that woman? Mr. Lestrangle had been absolutely certain of what he had seen. His veracity was obvious. And Annette's was not a face that one could easily forget, easily mistake for anyone else. In her heart Janey was convinced that he had indeed seen Annette with her brother passing as his wife. And she saw that Mr. Stirling was convinced also.

She had reached the garden of the Dower House, and she sank down on the wooden seat round the cedar. The sun had set behind the long line of the Hulver Woods, and there was a flight of homing rooks across the amber sky.

Then Annette must be guilty in spite of her beautiful face and her charming ways. Janey clasped her hands tightly together. Her outlook on life was too narrow, too rigid, to differentiate or condone. Annette had been immoral.

And was she, Janey, to stand by and see Roger, her Roger, the straightest man that ever walked and the most unsuspecting, marry her brother's mistress? Could she connive at such a wicked thing? Would Roger forgive her—would she ever forgive herself—if she coldly held aloof and let him ruin his life, drench it in dishonour, because she was too proud to say a word? It was her duty to speak, her bounden duty. Janey became dizzy under the onslaught of a sudden wild tumult within her. Was it grief? Was it joy? She only knew that it was anguish. Perhaps it was the anguish of one dying of thirst, to whom the cup of life is at last held, and who sees, even as he stretches his parched lips towards it, that the rim is stained with blood.

(To be continued.)

THE CHARM OF BISKRA.

BY ISABEL CLARKE.

IT was by way of Philippeville, one of the brightest of the smaller Algerian ports, that I journeyed to Biskra, and passed through, for the first time, the beautiful landscape of the North African Tell. It was in December, but there was little to suggest winter in the scene that met my eyes. The tracts of forest, filled with cork, ilex and olive trees and thick bushes of arbutus, were coloured tenderly in shades of softest green and grey, and the endless orchards of orange and citron trees were hung with bright fruits. Great blue stars of convolvulus decorated the hedgerows and twined over the porches of the little French homesteads. Overhead, the sky was of cloudless sapphire and the mountains were sharply etched against it. It was only when I passed the wide vineyards, empty except for the stunted brown stems, that I could realise it was December. Beyond Constantine, upon the High Plateaux that make a well-defined ridge between the green and fertile strip of the plains and the endless waste of desert to the south, an arid, rocky land presents itself. Scant and grudging is the pasturage offered to the flocks that move ceaselessly across the hills. Thin and meagre are the crops grown upon that land so patiently ploughed. Here and there a *chott* or salt lake, clear as crystal, gleamed like a shield of polished

steel, reflecting every detail of the mountains with faithful exactitude. Here, too, may be seen the green, scrublike growth of the alfa grass, so much exported to England, where it is used in the production of highly glazed paper. So far it has resisted all the efforts that have been made to cultivate it. Early in the afternoon the train dipped down suddenly into the oasis of El Kantara, known to the Arabs as Foun-el-Sahara—the Mouth of the Sahara. It is a place of palm trees and orange groves, watered by sweet springs, and possessing strange old Roman tombs and delicate fragments of Roman architecture. But the great marvel of El Kantara lies in that deep and narrow gorge where the huge violet sides of Djebel Metlili, riven asunder as if by the mighty stroke of an axe, disclose that abrupt and wonderful entrance into the Sahara. At its narrowest the rent is about forty yards wide and the length is three hundred yards. From the verdant and palm-clad beauty of the oasis the traveller gazes through that rent torn in the high rocks, and sees before him the illimitable white expanse of desert, silver pale and shining as if encrusted with gems. A little wind came up from the south, blowing the fine white sand into my face, reminding me of the desolate solitudes that lay beyond, the endless empty sands dipping far southward. Groves of date palms grew

close to the river banks, and hedges of wild oleander still showed a few belated blossoms of fragile pink. It is thus almost dramatically that one enters the desert from the stony alf-strewn ways of the High Plateaux. No longer needed now were the fur coats and foot-warmers that had been so necessary

gave a fresh impetus to the loafing profession of guide, which the Arab is always only too ready to adopt. He is, indeed, somewhat more of a pest than he used to be; he knows that he has been written about and perhaps presented in too flattering an aspect, and it has made him conceited and self-conscious.



M. Emil Frechon.

THE SIMPLE LIFE.

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at the hour of our early departure from Constantine. We seemed to have passed suddenly into a sub-tropical land quivering in the burning sunlight.

It is the fashion to say of Biskra that she has been spoiled since "The Garden of Allah" awakened the world to her hidden beauty, made her popular to the hordes of Cook's tourists and

But he is really no worse at Biskra than he is in Tunis. Immense and luxurious hotels have sprung up to supersede the simpler *caravanserais* of former days, when the little town was a favourite but quite unfashionable resort of French people in search of simplicity and sunshine. But I am inclined to think that Biskra is unspoiled. "The Heart of the Desert," as the Arabs



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PITCHING THE TENT.

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LISTENING TO THE STORY-TELLER.

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affectionately call her, she was the Ad Piscinam of the Romans, and the famous Third Legion sojourned in that wonderful and fertile oasis which can now be reached on the fifth day after leaving London. "Two things are necessary," says Stevenson, "in any neighbourhood where we propose to spend a life—

a desert and running water." Biskra possesses these essentials in abundance, and she has the additional advantage of constant, almost perpetual, sunshine. Her palm and olive and orange groves are watered by springs that have never failed. Close to her—so close, indeed, that she almost seems to mock at its



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A NOMAD CAMP.

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PREPARING COUS-COUS.

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RECITING THE KORAN.

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parched infertility—lies the white splendour of the desert with its pallor as of a calm sea faintly touched with blue haze. The moonlight-coloured city with its blanched streets lies surrounded by a fringe of perpetual verdure. Watch the dawn waking iris-hued in the eastern sky, painting the Aurès Mountains to a deeper rose and drawing a filmy amber veil across the sands, and I think you will agree with me that Biskra is unspoilable.

There are many simple sights that cannot fail to interest the unaccustomed visitor from the North, on account of their novelty. The Arab school, with the bright-eyed, inattentive little turbaned or befezzed scholars, listlessly reciting verses from the Koran, under the ægis of the *tolba*, or schoolmaster; the market-place, teeming with native vendors, story-tellers

and sand-diviners; the groups of picturesque Arabs wrapped in their white burnouses or shabby grey haicks; the caravans arriving almost daily from the South with their loads of dates; the swaying palanquins within which the women travel on the camels' backs, hidden and mysterious; the fine garden of Count Landon, with its lovely tropical trees and flowers; the village of Old Biskra, with its clay-built huts swarming with dark-eyed children—these are but a few of the picturesque, quaint or beautiful things that Biskra offers to the visitor. The nomad camps, too, are a source of interest with their tents of camel-hair cloth, guarded often by a white Kabyle dog. The nomad certainly gives a very practical example of the simple life, for his needs are reduced to a minimum. Food, shelter and clothing of the rudest kind are all that he requires



H. Walter Barnett.

A STREET SCENE IN BISKRA.

Copyright.

as he wanders from Desert to Tell with his flocks. Like the Bishop of Browning's poem, he seems only to ask that

That hutch should rustle with sufficient straw,

but he is nevertheless said to suffer greatly from rheumatism caused by incessant exposure to all weathers, and also from ophthalmia, which is a real scourge among the natives of Algeria, and results all too frequently in complete blindness.

About a week or ten days before Christmas the "Courses Indigènes," or native race-meeting, takes place at Biskra. This meeting is, of course, much less popular than the fashionable one which is held in the spring, but a good number of French people always attend it. There is a superstition in Biskra that this particular week is always the windiest in the year, and certainly, on the solitary occasion of which I have had experience, the reputation was justified. Even in the shelter of the stand we were thickly powdered with fine white sand that was blown in upon us by the high, strong wind. We drove out to the course in one of the shabby little carriages drawn by two swift ponies, which can be hired so cheaply in the town.

The Hippodrome d'El Alia was thronged with people, French for the most part, with a sprinkling of English and Germans, and some native Kaïds gorgeously appaïlled. The first part, "Courses du Ministère de la guerre," consisted only of two events, the distance in each case being one thousand five hundred mètres. In the second part, "Courses de la Commune Indigène," there were three events, and the longest distance run was two thousand four hundred mètres, this race being open to horses of all ages. The horses bore such names as Boucoucha, Lamari, Salah and Mabrouk, while the jockeys figured on the programme under such nomenclature as Messaoud-den-Chebha, Belgacem-ben-Mohamed and so forth. The course is of hard, white sand, upon which the flying hoofs beat with a noise like thunder.

The streaming burnouses of the Arab jockeys—red and white and blue of all shades—made patches of brilliant colour. There were no rows of raucous-voiced bookmakers shouting the odds; but as the Arabs are inveterate gamblers, no doubt a good deal of quiet betting went on. Among the spectators were many French officers, wearing the pale blue tunic of the famous Chasseurs d'Afrique. Most of them were combining business with pleasure, for the Arabs from all parts of the Desert bring their best horses to compete in the races, and these are frequently bought for the Remount Department of the African cavalry. Every effort is being made by the French Government to encourage horse-breeding among the Arabs.

Close to the grand stand some of the harem carriages, with their shuttered windows, could be seen wherein the Arab ladies of quality were sitting concealed, catching imperfect glimpses of the races and also of what probably interested them far more—the toilettes of the French women. A group of Spahis, in their bright red burnouses and high red boots, added to the picturesqueness of the gay scene. When the races were over we were invited to mount up into the judge's box to witness the *fantasia*. This was a thrilling and rather dramatic finale to the day's proceedings.

The men of each *goum*, or tribe, rode past, headed by their Kaid, or chief, galloping in rapid succession down that hard, white course, waving their swords and firing their guns as they went. The very smell of powder never fails to fill the Arab with maddest excitement, and the *fantasia* had all the appearance of a fierce cavalry charge. I retained an impression, vivid if fugitive, of kaleidoscopic colours passing swiftly by, blurred by the blue mist of the smoke mingling with the thick, white desert dust. The noise of the firing, of the beating hoofs and of the wild cheering of the multitude of spectators, the sight of the many-coloured burnouses and the bronze faces under their white turbans, left a confused sense upon my mind as of something strange and fantastic, almost unreal.

Driving home, we saw the sun setting behind the groves of palms in a sky that was coloured like a pomegranate blossom, with a glow that turned the very sands to flame. Djebel Ahmar-Kraddou, tallest peak of the Aurès Mountains, caught the reflection of it and shone as with rose-coloured fire. The palm fronds were softly stencilled against the sky. Then the swift, sudden twilight of the South drew its delicate purple veil over the scene. Strange music stole out of the silences, the faint flute notes, liquid and tender, of the *gezah*, the dull throbbing of tom-tom and derbouka. The moon rose over the white city of the desert and, touched by its matchless radiance, the streets looked as if they had been wrought of gleaming marble; the cold indigo shadows flung by the houses were sharply defined. And surely nowhere in the world can

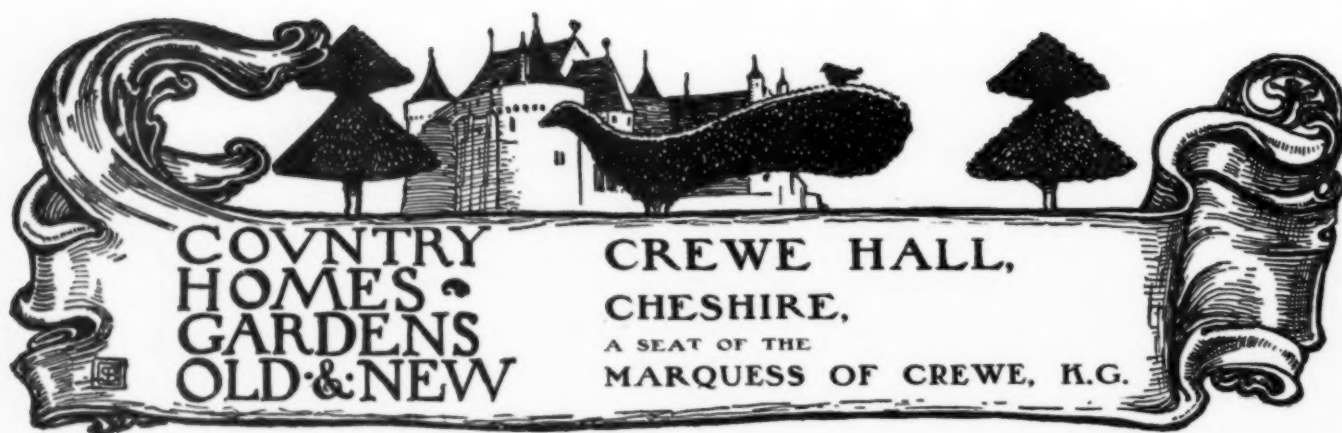
one see a wider expanse of sky, filled from end to end with clusters of golden stars, than that which hangs its canopy, velvet-soft, above the Heart of the Desert.

MARY THE PROTESTANT.

Princess and Queen of England: Life of Mary II., by Mary F. Sandars. (Stanley Paul.)

THIS delightful book is, among many good things, an effective antidote to a surfeit of historical reading of the formal order. Its keynote is personality. It is the history of the development of a very striking character, the gradual adaptation of a powerful nature to the environment in which it was placed by a varied combination of circumstances; and the process of evolution is especially interesting in that the environment was in the main essentially alien. The book forms a human document of the highest interest, and the author has approached her theme with a shrewd knowledge of human nature, a considerable aptitude for the analysis of human motives and a ready sympathy with human troubles. The treatment of such a theme may very conceivably have been a matter of some difficulty. The author has chosen well. She has steered a clear course between the Scylla of undiluted politics and the Charybdis of unadorned domestic history. There were undoubtedly temptations in either direction. The stream of European politics during the period covered by Mary's life was peculiarly troubled. Religion had not yet given way to commerce as a great guiding principle of national and international politics, and personal ambition habitually allied itself with religion. Diplomacy was still in the flower and freshness of its youth and had already attained to self-consciousness, England had not yet come to her supremacy. It was the age of Louis XIV. Autocrat himself in France, he wished France, which he personified, to be autocrat in Europe, and for a time he nearly realised his wish. While in France despotism was triumphant, in England it had received a decided check in the judicial (if not judicious) murder of the second Stewart. His son, Mary's father, was possibly the most futile of his race, because he completely declined to profit by the experience of his predecessors. He had two chief aims—to rule unchecked and to make England a Roman Catholic country. Both aims were destined to give colour to his daughter's life. Unfortunately for his hopes of success in the first, he could not afford to do without financial assistance, whether it came from Parliament or from some other source. Parliament, which had already tasted blood, and now regarded the occupant of the throne as its natural foe, if hardly conscious of its destinies, was at least conscious of its power. With a hostile Parliament, James was reduced to becoming the pensionary of the monarch who was threatening Europe. His dependence upon Louis made him a hypocrite, both personally and politically, and alienated the little remaining sympathy of a nation which had disliked him from the first. Unfortunately for his second aim, England was now decidedly Protestant in temper. To impose his religion on his people was an impossibility, though James was as blind to this impossibility as he was to most others. To both aims his daughter was fated to be a powerful obstacle. She was an ardent and devoted Protestant, and she was married to the ruler of a State which owed its very existence to the principles of religious independence and democracy. So much for the political side.

Miss Sandars has shown herself to be gifted with a nice sense of proportion. She has given us just the right amount of politics, and just the requisite savouring of domestic detail, which she has frequently introduced or explained by the insertion of private letters. She has shown us the intimate connection between the public and the private life of Mary, and clearly emphasised the principles which guided and governed both. In a word, we have a judicious mixture of the woman and the queen, though the great merit of the book is probably that it makes the woman the more prominent of the two. We are inclined to think of Mary less for what she was than for what she and her husband stood for—the triumph of Protestantism, English independence of France and the development of constitutional government. This book has taught us to appreciate Mary for what she was herself. We confess that we love Mary better as Princess of Orange than as Queen of England, and most of all as neither, but as a little girl, writing delightful letters, quite innocent of punctuation, to her "dearest dearest husband," Miss Apsley, and playing hide-and-seek in the grounds of the Palace. Mary's character is a curious complex, a complex of firmness and of adaptability. She was intensely and inflexibly devoted to her faith, and this devotion is probably the keynote to her character. But perhaps the most interesting fact of her life is the growth of her love for William. Married while still a child to a husband who was usually ill and who rarely spoke to her, a man whose thoughts were always of European affairs and never of his wife, she gradually came to love him with all the devotion of her nature. She was a woman of very considerable intellectual power. Her letter to James II., when, after failing to estrange her from her husband, he sought to turn her from her faith, is both for its style and for its thought a remarkable production. Her life must have been, on the whole, a decidedly unhappy one. She began as a child of the State, intended for use as a pawn in the game of politics which her relatives were playing. But the woman in her triumphed, and her devotion to her husband and his cause, in spite of many difficulties, and many inducements to desert them, entitles her to a place among the noblest of Englishwomen. William was a repulsive man, and to many other disadvantages as a husband he added infidelity. But Mary never failed in her loyalty. When her father resorted to the most despicable of plots to estrange her from her husband, in order that the heir to his crown might not be a Protestant, she treated his efforts with the contempt which they deserved, but which many a woman in her place would hardly have been strong enough to feel; and the knowledge of William's habitual unfaithfulness, though it grieved and humiliated her to an extent which must have been almost unsupportable, never seems to have altered her respect for the man whom she had schooled herself, as in duty bound, to honour and to love. She was exceedingly popular, both in Holland and in England. William's treatment of her was well known, and added the sympathy of her subjects to their esteem. She was a woman who was acutely conscious of her duty. Having at an early period formed a clear idea of that duty, she kept it continually before her eyes, and history speaks of neither lapse nor swerve. She was one of the finest products of the seventeenth century, and one of its truest children.



WHEN Their Majesties stayed at Crewe Hall last week they saw practically nothing of the great Jacobean house which was built by Sir Randolph Crewe, who was Lord Chief Justice in the last year of the reign of James I. and the first of his successor, Charles. The house as it stands to-day is, in the main, the work of Edward Barry, who undertook the rebuilding after it had been almost wholly destroyed by fire in 1866. Ormerod, the historian of Cheshire, says of Barry's work that it was "more in accordance with modern ideas of magnificence." The accompanying pictures show the florid way in which he handled Jacobean detail. Edward Barry lacked the sure grasp of design which distinguished his great father, Sir Charles. Both of them lived in days when architects were none too careful in works of restoration. The Victorian idea was that the earlier styles could be improved upon, and rendered more "finished" by alterations of detail and grouping, the fact being that the result is generally as unfortunate as the emendation of a classical author. Sir Charles,

really great as he was in the design of new buildings, such as the Reform Club and the Houses of Parliament, was too individual an artist to be entrusted with the handling of a historical house. He could re-create an old building and invest it with a new and striking character of its own, as he did in the case of the Treasury in Whitehall, but he scorned patient following in the footsteps of the old men. He, and others like him, never hesitated to clear away whatever stood in their path, confident in their own ability to do better than their predecessors. In this confident spirit Sir Charles Barry, with an audacity of which no modern architect is capable, laid hands on the Hall of William Rufus at Westminster, and did it so well that our natural criticism is partly disarmed. His son Edward, however, was not of the same metal. He was a brilliant planner, but his grasp of architectural problems is indicated by the fact that he designed Cannon Street and Charing Cross Railway Stations, the Star and Garter of Richmond and the large additions made to the National Gallery. Crewe Hall, therefore, is interesting rather as a monument to the lavish and Mæcenas-like spirit



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THE NORTH TERRACE.

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THE STAIRCASE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of the last Lord Crewe of the older creation, than as an example of the work of Edward Barry.

In the present Marquess of Crewe are joined three interesting families, Milnes, Offley and Crewe. The Milnes came originally from Derbyshire, but are rather to be regarded as a Yorkshire family, and more than one of them represented Yorkshire constituencies in the eighteenth century. Richard Monckton Milnes followed the Parliamentary traditions of his family by sitting for Pontefract from the year of Queen Victoria's Accession until 1863. It is, however, rather as a poet and critic that he left his mark on the Victorian Era, and he was raised to the peerage as Baron Houghton in the year that he left the House of Commons. By his marriage with Annabella Hungerford, daughter of the second Baron Crewe, he had an only

himself to a Parliament, and relied on Buckingham's unwise advice to fill his purse by way of loan. The Lord Chief Justice did not like the look of the scheme, and still less the idea of imprisoning subjects who were not ready to lend. The King, with that Stewart madness which brought him to his death, issued a writ dismissing Sir Randolph, whereat the Chief Justice, as Fuller tells us, "discovered no more discontentment than the weary traveller is offended when told that he has arrived at his journey's end." For two years he shut himself up in his home at Westminster, and held his peace, but in 1628 he could bear his absence from affairs no longer. In a letter to the Duke of Buckingham, which does not breathe the resignation attributed to him by Fuller, he pointed out that he had refused to go into Parliament lest

he should have to disclose the circumstances which led to his removal from the Bench "which I was willing should lie lapped up in my own bosom." He likewise sets out that he had warned none of his friends to speak of him in the Commons, as he always resolved to rely wholly upon the King's goodness. He points out that all the judges had been agreed in resisting the Royal injunction, and that he only had suffered for it. He asks what his position would have been if he had given way to the King, and all his brethren had continued to resist. "I had become a scorn to men, and had been fit to have lived like a scritch owl in the dark." The real trouble is revealed in his closing paragraphs. When he was at the Bar a King's Serjeant he had a profitable practice which he lost when he became Chief Justice. When that dignity was taken from him he had neither the one nor the other, for he could not return to advocacy. Even the Duke of Buckingham, ready as he was to break men in his mad attempt to establish Charles an autocrat, was sensible of the cruel injustice meted out to Crewe. He was then preparing to go abroad, and told Sir Randolph that he would right him in the King's favours. Little more than a month later Felton's arm had put Buckingham beyond the power of doing right or wrong. Presumably Crewe had few friends, for it was not until thirteen years later that Hollis moved an address to the King to bestow on him such an honour as to compensate him for the great loss he had sustained, but Charles seems never to have repented of his injustice.

Fuller noted of Crewe's architectural enthusiasms, "nor must it be forgotten that Sir Randolph first brought the model of excellent building into these remote parts; yea, brought London into Cheshire in the loftiness, sightliness and pleasantness of the structures." The house, like many another built in the first half of the seventeenth century, has been ascribed without the least reason to Inigo Jones. A good case has been made out for the continued use by our greatest Palladian architect of the more traditional methods of building many years after his plunge into classicism with the design of the Banqueting House in Whitehall, but it is excessively unlikely that he would have adopted such a design for Crewe Hall. In the richness of its outlines, its heavy groups of octagonal chimneys and in the detail of the stone dressings, it proclaims itself traditional work of the type which continued on Tudor models almost until the Commonwealth. Sir Randolph was no

longer young when he built his home in Cheshire, and evidently preferred the old ways of building. An innate conservatism, indeed, is to be expected from this great judge. When dealing with the Oxford Peerage case, which was adjudicated in 1625, he thus delivered himself: "Where is Bohun? Where is Mowbray? Where is Mortimer? Nay, which is more and most of all, where is Plantagenet? They are entombed in the urns and sepulchres of mortality. And yet, let the name and dignity of De Vere stand so long as it pleaseth God." These are the words of a man little likely to concern himself with the new architectural ideas which Inigo Jones brought in his portfolio from Italy. An old painting



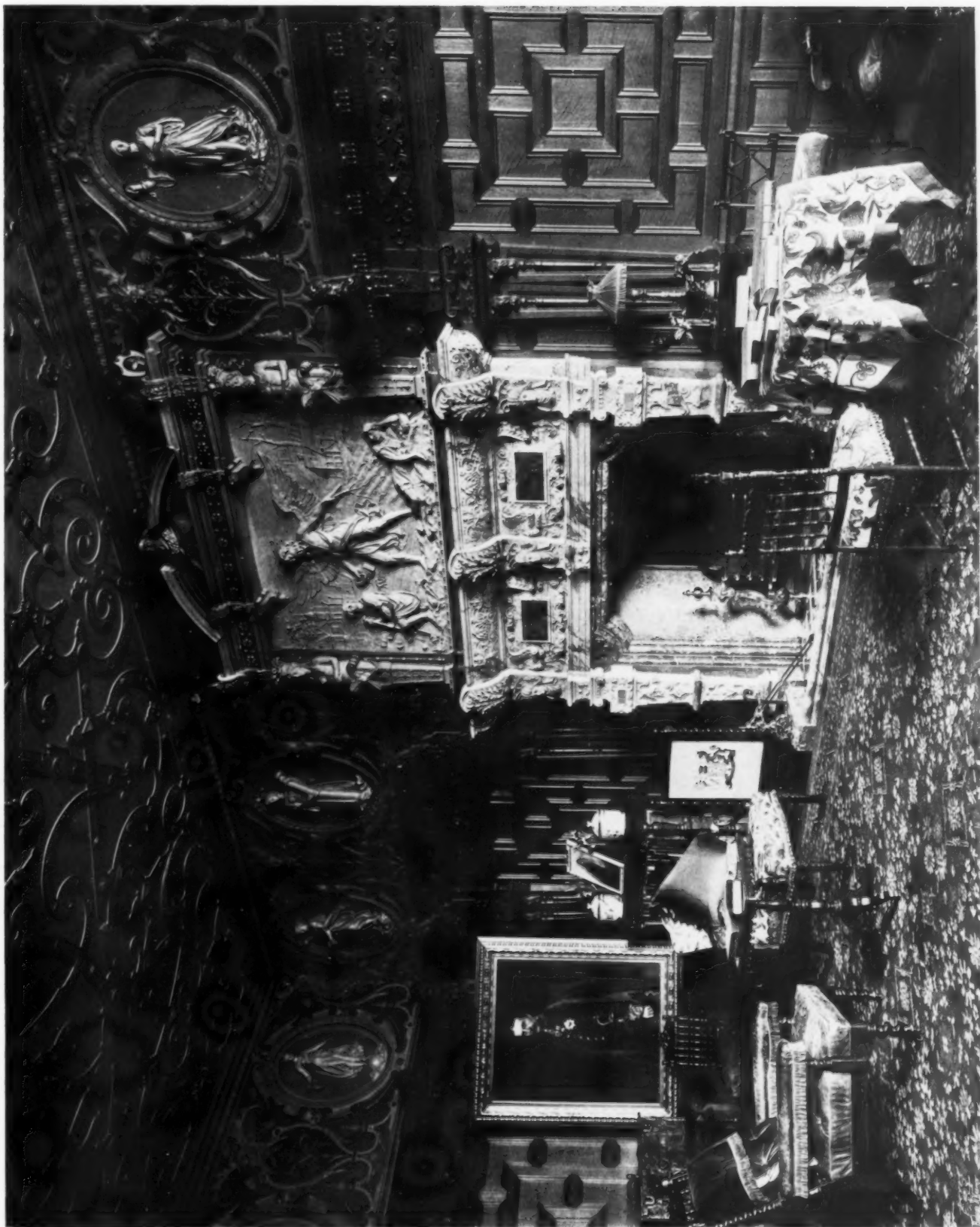
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CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE RECEPTION-ROOM.

"C.L."

son, the present Marquess, who inherited the Crewe estates on the death in 1894 of the third Baron. The Crewe title was revived as an Earldom in 1895 in favour of the second Lord Houghton, who, two years ago, was made Marquess of Crewe and received also the title of Earl of Madeley. He thus represents in a direct, albeit through the female, line Charles the First's Chief Justice, who built Crewe Hall.

Fuller says of this great jurist that "he served two kings, though scarce two years in his office, with great integrity." It was not long after the accession of Charles that Crewe proved himself too little supple in his attitude towards the constitutional irregularities of the King. Charles was afraid to trust



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THE CARVED PARLOUR.

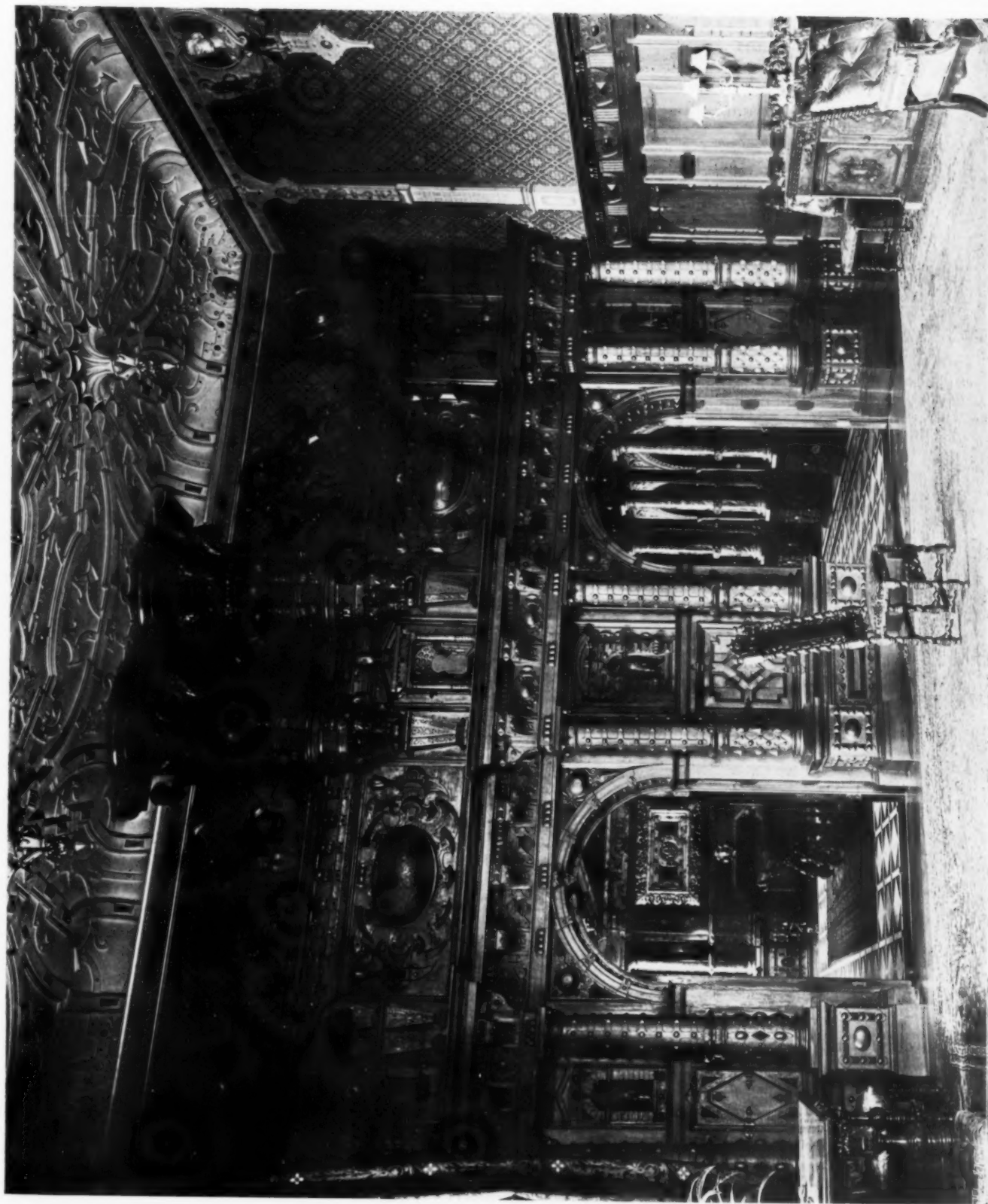
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CREWE HALL: THE LIBRARY

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THE SCREEN IN THE DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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of the house as he rebuilt it shows that it was surrounded with square courts and gardens, devised generously, as the Elizabethans loved to see them, and tricked out with trim parterres. The gardens as they are to-day owe their design to the elder Nesfield, father of a more distinguished son, Eden Nesfield, the friend and contemporary of Norman Shaw. By great good fortune many of the old pictures were saved in the great fire of 1866, including one of Sir Thomas Offley, painted by Peter Pourbus in 1565, and another Offley by Cornelius Jansen. These Offleys mark a break in the male Crewe line which occurred at the end of the seventeenth century. Anne Crewe, great grand-daughter of Sir Randolph, inherited the Crewe

mark cut upon it for purposes of identification. On reaching the Neva the logs are formed into rafts and are floated, under the charge of a man, down to St. Petersburg.

So far the weather has been of the most ungenial description, rain and snow almost incessantly, and it is quite impossible to obtain photographs of the many interesting things to be seen. I notice that the juniper is extremely common, and reaches a height unknown in Scotland. The melting of the snows discloses berries of the cranberry—as we know it in Scotland—(*Vaccinium vitis idaeae*), and an abundance of fruit of the Russian cranberry, which is, I think, a species of *Oxycoccus*, with thin trailing stems and large red berries, quite untouched by frost or snow. Many birches are to be seen, some of exceptional size—as we know the tree in Great Britain—and I notice that the fuel of the railway locomotives consists almost entirely of this wood.



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THE MARBLE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

estates, and married John Offley of Madeley. Their son changed his name to Crewe, and his grandson, after a long political career, was created first Baron Crewe of Crewe.

LAST DAYS OF WINTER IN A RUSSIAN FOREST.

WRITE these lines from the forest country towards the North of Russia. After a stay in the Schwarzwald, where, even at a height of three thousand feet above sea level, spring had already arrived, it is a none too pleasant experience to be plunged again into winter, but here snow still lingers, and a few inches below the surface the ground is frozen fast. In driving a distance of some six miles from the railway station what struck me most forcibly was the deplorable condition of the roads. Seated in a droskie, it was literally a matter of considerable skill to retain one's position. It would be quite impossible for a motor to travel over these roads, but as, hereabouts, a car is an unknown object, there are no motorists to write furious letters to the local press on this subject. The estate—belonging to my host—is one hundred and fifteen thousand acres in extent. Everywhere is an abundance of water, so that forests reach a marketable value only on certain of the drier districts, and over thousands of acres only stunted vegetation, growing, or rather existing, in water, meets the eye. An extensive system of drainage is now being carried out at considerable cost, and this, it is hoped, will allow most of the estate to be planted up. The Scots fir (*Pinus sylvestris*) is undoubtedly the predominating tree hereabouts. The stems are straight and tall, and I was interested to see that the rate of growth approximated that in the Schwarzwald, although the growing season here must be a short one. Spruce (*Picea excelsa*) is also common, but silver fir and larch are entirely absent. The trees are felled under a rotation of eighty years, and all young woods spring from natural regeneration—not a single tree is planted. The logs are dragged to a river. Here they remain till the break up of the ice—an event which is expected to take place in the course of the next few days—when they are floated down the river Neva. It should be explained that before being floated down each log has a distinguishing

mark cut upon it for purposes of identification. On reaching the Neva the logs are formed into rafts and are floated, under the charge of a man, down to St. Petersburg.

Of agriculture I have seen very little. It is hereabouts primitive and practised on a small scale. Owing to the lateness of the spring it is impossible to sow the cereal crops till May, and it must be remembered that the first of May in Russia is, in English reckoning, the fourteenth of that month owing to a difference of thirteen days in the calendar; but most of the wheat is set down in August, and at the present moment shows ample signs of the severe weather of winter. Every peasant is the possessor of a cow. At present these animals are all under cover, but on April 23rd (Russian style), whatever be the weather and whether the grass be green or otherwise, the cows are turned into the fields, having previously received a blessing at the hands of the local priest. I am informed that better returns could be had from the land if the peasants would plough more deeply, but everywhere here in Russia one is impressed by the lack of energy in the population. Even in Petersburg there is no hurry, no bustle. It is as if one were in an enormous village and filled with the most apathetic of village inhabitants—a state of matters which is the more strongly impressed on my mind by reason of a recent visit to Germany, where discipline and method have become a science. Many of the Russian peasants are extremely handsome men—fair-haired, and with rugged beards and faces strongly browned by sun and snow. Near here are three churchyards. Surrounded by no fence, the graves are surmounted by most primitive crosses, and arranged with a complete absence of method.

To the ornithologist the country is disappointing, at this season of the year at all events. Scarcely a single bird is heard in song in the woods, not even a call note. The most common bird, as far as I can determine, is the hoodie crow, which is everywhere seen, its grey colouring harmonising well with the desolate country. Capercaillie and black game are in the more unfrequented parts of the forest, and the eagle is also said to be present. I also noted a buzzard sailing over a village with his eye, I imagine, on one of the many hens. Chaffinches and what I take to be a bunting are common, as are also the various titmice. Wolves are scarce, but bears are shot hereabouts every winter. Apparently there are no trout in the rivers, but there is a small fish the name of which I was unable to discover, and during a walk this afternoon by the river-side I was struck with the number of nets set near the banks. In the course of half a mile I should say at least twenty nets were awaiting any unwary fish, though whether these nets are productive I was unable to ascertain. At the moment of writing (April 11th) the rivers are rising rapidly, as the result of the slight thaw and the constant rain and snow, and much ice is floating seaward.

SETON GORDON.

THE ROCK GARDEN AT FRIAR PARK.



AN EFFECTIVE GROUPING OF SUN ROSES.

THE sight of the Matterhorn under an English sky, ocular assurance that our old lion of Zermatt lifts his sharp-cut outline on the banks of the Thames, cannot fail to interest a Swiss Alpinist. Yet this spectacle, unique though it be in the art of landscape gardening, would not of itself have inspired me confidently to place this rock garden in a class by itself. A copy must always be inferior to an original, and it ill becomes a past president of the Swiss Alpine Club to fall into raptures before an English Matterhorn. It is rather this: throughout the whole design of the Alpine garden at Friar Park there is, from the first, a peculiar and compelling impression of unparalleled extent and grandeur. Some three acres of ground are occupied; more than seven thousand tons of rock are already pressed into service. A portion remains still under construction; its completion will extend the area to four acres, and ten thousand tons of millstone grit will have been conveyed some two hundred miles from Yorkshire. In itself this represents an immense expenditure of energy, a veritable toil of Titans, for some of the blocks employed (shifted, too, it may be, more than once) weigh as

much as twelve and a-half tons. Yet all this gigantic architecture would go for nothing if it were not artistic in the highest sense. Here Sir Frank Crisp, who, with the aid of his head gardener, Mr. F. Knowles, has created this fair prospect, shows a master's skill, for the secret of the success achieved is harmony of line, sense of proportion and contrast and, above all, the art with which a scale has been given to the whole. So harmonious is the picture, so charming are the proportions, that one feels suddenly transported to the secret heart of Alpine nature. Old climber as I am, whose whole life has been spent among the mountains, I felt myself one fair morning, as I sat alone beside a brook that murmurs at the foot of this rocky flower-

gemmed mountain-side, carried in spirit to my native Alps; I caught myself whistling an Alpine song.

Not only is the garden as a whole well proportioned and pleasing in its harmony; the details also are so varied and the artistic merits so arresting that one may wander among the paths and rocky ways for hours without weariness or mental fatigue. Everywhere, in happiest combinations of form and colour, is lavished an exuberance of floral life; mountain vegetation



HYBRID PINKS AND HARDY HEATHS.

has been summoned from every clime to play its part; natives of the Alps consort with those of the Himalaya and of Japan; New Zealand challenges the Arctic, Canada Cathay; the cacti of Mexico spread their thorns near rhododendrons of our Alps, and mountain orchids lift modest spikes beside the schizocodon, the famous soldanella of Nippon.

Southern slopes are rich in sun-lovers, northern in ferns and arctic or woodland flora. A soft and equal temperature, a constant and kindly moisture that charges the air, secure a perfect climatic environment; thanks to this and still more to appropriate blendings of soil, at Friar Park Alpines flourish with a luxuriance which it were idle to require of unaided Nature. Nowhere else can be seen such sturdy and floriferous specimens of *Omphalodes luciliae*, an Eastern forget-me-not with bluish foliage and large flowers of sky-blue and rosy undercolour; the Alpine rhododendrons (*R. hirsutum* and *R. ferrugineum*), both typical and albino forms, are finer than in the Alps themselves; the ramondias, both from the Pyrenees and the Balkans, attain to marvellous size. A host of campanulas contests the palm of elegance with primulas of Central Asia and our own old Europe, and on slopes abutting on the Matterhorn one may walk upon a close turf of saxifrages and mountain silenes, spreading around in wonderful carpets of green.



ROCK GARDEN POOL WITH CAPE POND-WEED AND WATER-LILIES.

I well remember the admiring exclamations of some hundred and twenty Continental visitors (brought last May to London by the International Exhibition) who were invited to pass a Sunday in the garden. Ladies begged permission to gather edelweiss growing upon the sunny rocks and carry the flowers as precious trophies back to France and Belgium. Among the loudest in his admiration was His Imperial Highness the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Austria, when he found upon the slopes a complete collection of the flora of the high Tyrolean Alps. He could scarcely trust his eyes, and wondered whether he were the victim of an optical illusion. Nor can the sense of illusion be questioned; indeed, therein lies the true value of the landscape. Every detail proclaims the creative will, not of an architect, but of an artist who has wished to reproduce at home Alpine nature as she is.

The collection is so large that it may be considered complete or practically so. In richness, the only equal I know of is that at the Royal Botanical Garden of Edinburgh. But the plan is on so vast a scale that one does not at first realise this. Many visits and an up-to-date knowledge of the descriptions given in horticultural papers are needed to give an exact account. The species under cultivation are close upon three thousand—which must surely be a record in this particular line. It is



A PATHWAY OF FLAT STEPPING-STONES WITH SEDUMS AND ROCKFOILS.

impossible to give even an approximate list of the plants at Friar Park, nor would such a list be of general interest. Everything that submits to cultivation is there, and in very large quantities. No isolated specimens dotted here and there, but massed groups, broad belts which one can only describe by "as in Nature." There are banks of rhododendrons and Alpine "heaths," masses of *Dianthus*, sheets of androsaces; sunless points of rock are clothed with delicate ferns, golden corydalis, Alpine primulas and ramondias; the Chilean perennial *tropaolum* (la Capucine) flings across a rock its arms of



A BOLD GROUPING OF ROCKWORK.



THE WALL HAREBELL AND PINKS.

flaming yellow, in wonderful contrast to the pale beauty of the bell-flowers from Dalmatia. In the shadow of the daphnes gather colonies of gentians; the bright and rollicking geum of the Balkans (*G. coccineum*), together with his confrère from Chili (*G. chilense*), lift heads of blazing cardinal upon deep blue carpets of veronics. Lady's-slippers from North America, from Japan, from the Urals, from our own Alps, flower beside a whispering brook in a profusion that surpasses Nature. The



A STUDY IN WHITE AND SCARLET.

delicate *Linnaea borealis*, that arctic child which lingers in but one or two Alpine valleys, one of the last relics of a glacial age, spreads in sheets, while with me, near Geneva, a thousand pains will barely make it live. Here flower follows upon flower, year in, year out; January begins with *Erica carnea*, the only heath that endures limestone, the delicate daphne of the Bosnian Alps (*D. Blagayana*), whose softly scented flowers perfume the garden from January to March. Then come the bulbs,



SEA PINKS AND VIOLAS.



ROCK ROSES AND GERANIUMS.

and all the mountain family is represented, flowering onward from the early days of spring. Next the anemones, the primroses, the soldanellas, especially the gentians; truly charming were the broad masses of the winsome *Gentiana verna*, which jewels our Alpine pastures at the coming of spring. In March and April the whole air is sweet with the scent of the garland flower (*Daphne Cneorum*). Terrestrial orchids, saxifrages, androsaces, pansies, violets and aubrietias succeed. And from the month of April onward enchantment reigns, and every corner of the garden has some special charm. The older portion of the garden is also the more natural, for the plants have reached their normal development. At its foot lies a little pond, a lake in miniature, where trout dispute with tortoises, and aquatic plants in great number display their graces. Upon the edge is a little chalet, a sort of Alpine refuge. This is Sir Frank's favourite view-point for showing off his work; it is the headquarters of the garden, from which have been issued the orders and counter-orders till all has been declared complete. Yet I am by no means confident that everything is yet finished; there is a certain feature which may be changed, for it is not exactly to the architect's liking. From this chalet many and many a visitor must have carried away an impression that I have often felt—of a peaceful, fairly-ordered prospect, in which one finds a balanced harmony of Alpine life and Alpine vegetation. Butterflies are foraging, the stream goes murmuring by or breaks in waterfalls; the flowers sing eternal praises to their Maker. But lo! abruptly comes a bird, perchance a simple sparrow; he perches on the Matterhorn, and with the ruin of the scale every illusion tumbles down, for the charm is broken. The inscription found upon the chalet is by the Rev. Canon W. W.



HELIANTHEMUMS VELUTINUM AND COCCINEUM.

Fowler, "Arte tua rupes crispantur, Crispe, colore. Dat sterilis flores, munera crispa, lapis."

The northern and western section is still under construction. It will practically double the area of the garden, and will be surrounded by a "Swiss or Alpine meadow," which Sir Frank Crisp has conceived, and which will undoubtedly be a novelty in garden design. This "meadow" is to contain all the flora of Alpine pastures, from the silver thistle (*Carlina*) to the gentians, from bell-flowers to salvias and orchids. As yet there is little to write of this portion; but the abysses in which it falls from the Matterhorn (doubtless suggested by the gorge of the Valtouranche descending on the Italian side to the valley of Aosta) are so deep and the forms so colossal, that I question whether it may not some day surpass the south-eastern portion.

At the end of the path which leads to the very base of the Matterhorn and at the foot of the Theodule glacier is a mysterious entrance which leads into an ice-grotto, such as we see at Grindelwald, with an exit on to the western half of the garden. It is but one of the countless surprises which the genial host of Friar Park keeps for his visitors. And these are many; it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that almost every amateur grower of Alpines in England and on the Continent has inspected it.

One may also mention that the garden is opened to the public every Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. from May to September. To avoid crowding a charge of sixpence is made, and the proceeds given to charitable objects. A "Guide for the Use of Visitors" has been published by Sir Frank Crisp, who shows himself a master in entertaining the public and interesting them in the life of plants. It is admirably illustrated and full of curious, caustic and satiric observations, which prove in the author the presence of a vein of humour and philosophy which at once arrests and retains your interest in his work.

Even in England, that land of conscientious work, it is rare to find an alpinum so complete as this. It has already a world-wide reputation and has furnished examples of several rare species for purposes of illustration and photographic reproduction. The rare *Schizocodon soldanelloides*, the famous *Jankaea Heldreichii*, which comes from the most perilous cliffs of Olympus, *Campanula petraea* have been flowered here far better than anywhere else, and in themselves would make a name for the Rock Garden of Friar Park.

HENRY CORREVON.

IN THE GARDEN.

A MOMENTOUS DISCOVERY FOR FRUIT-GROWERS.

LAST week I was very fortunate in seeing a most notable discovery that has been made at the National Fruit and Cider Institute, Long Ashton, near Bristol. This has now been constituted an agricultural and horticultural research station under the University of Bristol. It is usual before the public cider-tasting day to call in a number of cider judges to go through the various ciders and formulate an opinion of their merits and demerits. It was to these experts that Professor B. T. P. Barker, the Resident Director of the Institute, showed his discovery, and they were much impressed with the importance of the same. Most fruit-growers are familiar with the discoloration and blackening of Pear blossom and foliage. The bloom, instead of setting, turns black and soon falls off. This has hitherto been attributed to a nip of frost or to insect attack, which has been termed "blight"; but which was the cause the average fruit-grower could not determine, although he was fully conversant with the harm done. Sometimes cold winds were considered to be very predisposing to this blighting influence. The discovery that has been made at Long Ashton has now upset all these existing ideas. It has now been ascertained beyond doubt that this blackening and losing of the bloom is due to a bacillus. The organism responsible for the disease has been isolated in the laboratories at the Institute, and infection experiments with pure cultures of the bacteria have proved that this organism is the real

source of the trouble. It develops very rapidly indeed in the usual cultural media of the laboratory, and under damp, humid conditions in the open. It has been ascertained that the disease is not limited to Pears only, as the bacteria have also been found in the Institute nurseries and plantations attacking Apples and Plums and producing very similar damage, the result of the attack being that the fruits wither and die off, so that a considerable percentage of the crop is lost. That the mischief is not purely local is shown, as specimens of similarly attacked Pear blossoms have been already obtained from different parts of the country, and on test the organism has been found to be present. There is, therefore, no doubt that it is widely spread in the fruit-growing districts, and that it must cause very considerable loss to fruit-growers each year. The life-history and characters of the bacillus are being examined, and during the course of the year experiments will be carried on to endeavour to find a method of dealing with the pest. That this will be no easy matter is shown by the fact that it appears on trees that have been winter-washed; usually the spring and summer washes have been directed to combating insect attacks. A remedy will probably be found in a wash that will deal with the organism during the period of its greatest activity.

The discovery of this bacillus has also diverted attention in another direction. It has been noticed that the Isle of Wight disease in bees is at the zenith of its activity during the period of fruit bloom, and that one of the most prominent symptoms of the disease is the distended abdomen of the bee, usually filled with undigested pollen. Scientific authorities attribute the disease in bees as being due to bacterial origin. Is the recently discovered bacterial disease of the fruit bloom amid which bees so freely work, and from which they would obtain infected pollen, in any way the cause of the death of the bees? There is evidently plenty of scope for an investigation of the highest import to fruit-growers in general. It has been noticed in the West of England for several years past that the cider

Apple orchards were not producing so freely as they did a couple of decades since, and latterly this has been set down to lack of fertilisation, owing to the loss of bees from foul brood and other causes.

ELDRED WALKER.

[The particulars set forth by our correspondent are of considerable importance to fruit-growers. The name and description of the bacillus would be welcome, so that investigations could be carried out in other directions. During the last few years much of the damage usually attributed to spring frosts has been recognised as the work of the Apple-sucker, or *Psylla*. Now that the bacillus has been isolated it ought not to be difficult to discover a remedy.—ED.]

LITERATURE.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

NO more remarkable book is likely to be published this year than the one which the Countess Marie Larisch has written and called *My Past* (Eveleigh Nash). It belongs to a class of literature which we do not care very much about, although it has recently shown a tendency to increase in volume. Many of our readers must be old enough to remember the tragic and mysterious death of the Crown Prince of Austria, who was found shot under extraordinary circumstances in his hunting-lodge at Meyerling. That is twenty-four years ago, and there has never been any satisfactory explanation offered of the tragic occurrence. In connection with it, however, the name of the Countess Marie Larisch has been frequently associated. In fact, her reputation has lain under a cloud since its occurrence. Her professed object in writing this book is to vindicate her name and fame. There is no doubt about her having put together a most arresting story, and everybody who either remembers the event or has read about it cannot fail to read what she has to say with interest. At the same time, a word of warning is needed. The Countess is in the position of a witness entering the box and relating her account of a crime without subjecting herself to cross-examination or any of the other tests usually applied to evidence. She cannot, therefore, blame those who receive her version with a certain amount of incredulity. The Countess is connected with the Royal House of Austria through a morganatic marriage. Her father, Duke Ludwig of Bavaria, contracted an alliance of this kind with Henrietta Mendel, who was created Baroness von Wallersee. She was their only child. Her mother was received by the ducal family as one of themselves, and the little girl was educated by a succession of governesses, and brought up in an extremely healthy outdoor manner. The Empress of Austria at that time was one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and was addicted to riding and playing about with horses generally. As the little girl advanced in years, her capabilities as a horsewoman commended her to the notice of the Empress. At Schönbrunn, at a family dinner, she made the acquaintance of the Crown Prince Rudolph, and she says that the Empress before dinner addressed this warning to her: "Marie, to-night you will see Rudolph; I warn you against him, because he will turn on you if ever he gets the chance." It strikes one as a very curious remark for a mother to make. We need not pay much attention to the history or other adventures of the narrator herself. She tells us that at sixteen her most ardent suitor was Count Herbert Bismarck. Later on she was to make a favourable impression on King Edward VII. That was when she was married and was staying at Claridge's with her husband. As a cure for her fatigue he recommended her a large whisky and soda, and "was most charming, full of good-natured chaff, and I spent a very pleasant evening." We cannot pass a little thumbnail sketch of Louise Duchess of Manchester:

For some reason the Duchess did not like me, and as she had a very *mauvaise langue* she did not spare me whenever I happened to be the subject of conversation. The Prince of Wales was then at Baden, and as his Royal Highness seemed pleased to renew my acquaintance, the Duchess spread all kinds of scandal about our innocent friendship.

In the meanwhile, Rudolph had been working out his own life-history. As she puts it, he had been "travelling about to inspect Princesses," but "his many adventures with charming and lovely women had made his taste ultra fastidious." At last he came to Brussels, and, according to the malicious chronicler, "weary of a choice of many evils, he decided to take the least of them as represented by the Princess Stéphanie of Belgium." In the same acid style she goes on to narrate that "his proposal for her hand was jumped at by grasping old King Leopold, and the Crown Prince accepted his fate most philosophically." Her tone would not commend itself to an impartial juror; but apparently her aim is to show that

Prince Rudolph had many temptations towards libertinism. The story grows in intensity when the Baroness came to Vienna in September, 1888. The last stage begins when she met the Baroness Vetsera. This was the mother of the Baroness Mary Vetsera, whose dead body, it will be remembered, was found in the lodge with that of the Crown Prince. Already, in 1888, there had been family trouble owing to the young and engaging girl's infatuation for the Crown Prince. According to the writer, she already had had a love-affair with an English officer, and was of an amorous temperament. For some time after that there was a period of inaction as far as observation went; but it was very evident that Mary and the Crown Prince saw more of one another than was generally believed. At the same time, Rudolph was getting into a political intrigue, his object being to obtain for himself the Crown of Hungary. It is difficult to compress the story, and one can only give a few impressions of it. One of these is the persistence with which the Baroness not only writes down, but repeats, the unfavourable opinion which Rudolph expressed of herself. In an interview with Count Andrassy, she gives the words used by Rudolph:

"I foolishly gave my promise to Rudolph, and I could not go from it. When I reproached him he laughed at me. Yes, Count Andrassy, I repeat, he laughed at me, and you can tell the Empress what her son said. It is not pleasant, but I will not be so misjudged. 'Since when,' Rudolph asked, 'have you been considered fit to play the saint? You are a fine one to talk to me of honour or loyalty. You, who have been the go-between for my mother.'"

"Say no more, Countess."

"No, you shall listen. 'You have been the go-between for my mother since you were a girl, and yet you dare to mention morality to me, when you have not scrupled to stand by and see my father deceived.' You may well turn away your face, Count Andrassy, but I am speaking the truth. Take this message from me to my aunt. If she had been kinder to Rudolph he would have trusted her and not made use of me."

Other passages in the book suggest that Rudolph was not alone in holding this opinion of her character. A little sketch given of Mary's mother seems to excuse her in a way. This is the view taken by the worldly and cynical Baroness:

"I don't want my daughter to be openly compromised, although there are many who would jump at the prospect of a liaison with the Crown Prince. You are his cousin; will you undertake a very delicate mission for me? I want you to talk plainly to the Prince about Mary. You might even give him a hint that matters might be arranged if he is really desperately in love with her. I only wish we lived in the times of Louis XV.," said the perplexed lady. "Favourites like Madame de Pompadour and the Dubarry were then quite recognised by Society. How annoying it is that nowadays intrigues with Royalties have to be so explained away!"

Such are the elements in the tragedy. They are worked up almost too skilfully by the Baroness. The very effectiveness of the situations, which come one upon the top of another, give her the air of being a special pleader. Whether it will be possible either to substantiate or contradict her story is difficult to say. Not many people could ever have known the secret of Meyerling, and of those who could once have been asked a goodly number now are dead. It is doubtful, then, if any historical advantage is to be gained by recalling this strange chapter of the past. At the best, the Countess Marie Larisch has only cast a lurid light upon the characters of the drama, but there is no doubt that her book will be eagerly and widely read.

MR. HEWLETT'S POETRY.

Helen Redeemed and Other Poems, by Maurice Hewlett. (Macmillan.)

WHETHER Mr. Hewlett takes his readers into the Kingdoms of Mediæval Romance, to the Golden Age of Greek Epic or shows to them the world wherein they live, there is the same peculiar vision; the images seem like those of the *camera lucida*, somewhat hard and too clear, with an unnatural sharpness and perspective; for they are idealised as they pass through the lens of his mind to the screen of his prose or verse. In some measure this effect may be due to the intentional discrimination by means of which, like all artists, Mr. Hewlett selects just what he considers necessary to expound his theme; in

part it may be the nature of the media, for Mr. Hewlett's poems, like pictures in tapestry, are rich, ornate and slowly wrought; but we feel that more than this is required to give a complete explanation of the peculiar effect. Indeed, Mr. Hewlett's mind seems to be opaque to much in the world that forces itself upon the ordinary observer, and perhaps his work therefore loses something of virility from its very daintiness; for ugliness is the foil to beauty and delicacy presupposes coarseness, while in Mr. Hewlett's world there is no antithesis, so there is a consequent lack of power and reality. But, on the other hand, the very delicacy of perception which militates against strength enables the author to perceive some truths which would have evaded a coarser mind; the absorption of Heien, in the scene between Menelaus and Helen before the walls of Troy, will serve as an example of both his insight and his idealism:

Whereat made virgin, as all women are
By love's white purging fire which leaves no scar
Where all was soiled and seamed before the torch
Of Eros toucht the heart, and the keen scorch
Lickt up the foul misuse of vase so fair
As woman's body, Helen flusht and fair
Leaned from the wall a fire-hued seraph's face
And in one rapt long look gave and took Grace.
Deep in her eyes he saw the light divine,
Quick in him ran fierce joy of it like wine.

At the end of a fine passage wherein Cassandra sees the flight of the gods from Troy, Mr. Hewlett writes some lines that might be an exposition of the mission of all poets:

And other Gods and other, of stream and tree
And hill and vale—for nothing there can be
On earth or under Heaven, but hath in it
Essence whereby alone its form may hit
Our apprehension, channelled in the sense
Which feedeth us, that we through vision dense
See Gods as trees walking, or in the wind
That singeth in the bents guess what's behind
Its wailing music.

And inasmuch as the author has the power to see these things he is a true poet.

W.H.L.

"TYPHOON."

Typhoon, by Melchior Lengyel. English version by Laurence Irving. (Methuen.)

OF "Typhoon" the play it does not come within our province to speak at the present moment; but the book in which it is printed offers much to comment upon. The aim of the author is to show that the Japanese standard of morality is higher than that of Europe, and he has evidently planned his work with the idea of making this point good by illustrative incident. It will be conceded that, at a superficial glance, he has achieved this effect; but the play is probably more convincing under the limelight than in cold print. The main idea of the play centres in the murder of a *demi-mondaine* by Tokerao, one of the principal characters. The circumstances are as follows: She has played the part of Delilah to this Samson and seriously interfered with the concentrated attention to the mission for which he has been sent to Paris, that of spying out the land, as it would appear. The Japanese colony, consisting of some dozen or so, have represented to him that he should give her up. He endeavours to turn her out, and a wild scene takes place between them, in the course of which she insults the picture of the Mikado, and he, driven to fury, takes her life. The European sense of justice would demand his life for hers; but what we are asked to believe is that the higher civilisation of the Japanese causes them to struggle one with another which shall take the blame of the murder and suffer the appropriate punishment. They place duty above everything else, and because Tokerao has his work to finish they will not let him die. They succeed in this enterprise, and the play ends when he finishes his work and takes his own life, the last sentence being a retort to a Frenchman who calls the deed horrible. "Horrible. Why is that horrible? Death is not horrible. What was born must die. That has got to be—and counts not greatly. What does count greatly is Life and Duty." It is all very plausible and very false. The dramatist has just that amount of cleverness "which is necessary to tickle the ears of the groundlings," or perhaps a class a little above them. To do so he has to strain badly at truth. Human nature is no more flawless among the Japanese than among any other people, and it is trying one's faith high to say that a chance dozen of them who happen to be at Paris are all generously resolved to die in place of the true murderer. Moreover, it is a monstrous doctrine that because a man is engaged in some work for his country he may with impunity break the neck of anyone with whom he has a quarrel. It is, too, a very poor sort of pride and allegiance that would cause a man to lose his self-control because a light woman spoke insultingly of the object of his highest reverence. There is a deeper and stronger pride which would have recognised that the words and acts of such a woman would produce as little effect as feathers dashed against a precipice. Stripped of the sentimental embroidery round it, the situation resolves itself into a low wrangle in which the man entirely lost his self-command. In a word, the morality is the crude product of a nation just emerging out of darkness.

MR. LOCKE'S SOLUTION OF THE RIDDLE.

Stella Maris, by William J. Locke. (Lane.)
STELLA MARIS is a dream book. There is a classical breadth and spaciousness in the drama; indeed, there is the refining and purifying influence which the greatest of Greek critics demanded as the justification of tragedy. It is a book to be read in the small hours of the morning, in the magic time which belongs neither to to-day nor to to-morrow, when all things are possible and the realities have lost their sharp focus and detail. We do not wish to say that Mr. Locke has committed a *bêtise* and given us impossible people in an unreal environment. It is far otherwise, but he has idealised character and raised it on to a high imaginative plane by the magic of his art, as the creator should; and because we are more accustomed to the commonplace we need a certain detachment, which does not come in the busy hours of the day, in order that we may tune ourselves to the pitch of his work. At first Stella seems to be of those dreams who ever haunt the male imagination, delightful, elusive and impossible; then her creator makes us realise that she is a woman as he adds each delicate

stroke to her delineation. Bound by a malady which will not allow her to make the slightest movement, she dominates the house from the room open to the sky and sea, where she dwells in state, attended by her Great Dane, the Lord High Constable, as she whimsically calls him, and the others of her court, John Risca, a man made to plough the stormiest seas, overwhelmed by a tragedy which is almost too heavy to be borne, only can find rest in the wide sea-chamber of Stella Maris, which has been made a peculiar sanctuary "on whose threshold grievances and differences and bickerings and curses and tears and quarrellings were left like the earth-stained shoes of the Faithful on the threshold of a mosque."

It was the unwritten law of the house; Stella's room was sacrosanct. An invisible spirit guarded the threshold and forbade entrance to anything evil or mean or sordid or even sorrowful, and had inscribed on the portal in unseen, but compelling, characters

Never harm nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh.

Whence came the spirit, from Stella herself or from the divine lingering in the faulty folk who made her world, who can tell? There never was an invisible spirit guarding doors and opening hearts, since the earth began, who had not a human genesis. From man alone, in this myriad-faceted cosmos, can a compassionate God, in the form of angels and ministering spirits, be reflected. Perhaps the radiant spirit of the child herself, triumphing over disastrous circumstances, instilled a sacred awe in those who surrounded her; perhaps the pathos of her lifelong condemnation stirred unusual depths of pity. At all events the unwritten law was irrefragable. Outside Stella's door the wicked must cast their evil thoughts, the gloomy shed their cloak of cloud, and the wretched unpack their burden of suffering. Whether it was for the ultimate welfare of Stella Maris to live in this land of illusion is another matter. In this atmosphere of pagan worship dwelt Stella Maris, a lovely angel, joyous, untried, untamed, sexless and unspotted by the world. Then came the miracle. A physician was found who could cure Stella Maris and give to her the normal life of women. So Ariel is invested with womanhood, and very delicately and with a very certain touch does Mr. Locke accomplish it. After all, it is the everyday miracle of childhood; but in Stella Maris's case there are added difficulties. The knowledge of good and evil had not come to her gradually; from a Paradise of the Saints, from a world that she believed to be an incarnation of the Master's teaching, she must descend and walk upon the earth, little changed by the passage of two thousand years since Bethlehem. She discovers, inevitably, that those whom she loves have deceived her; and she has not acquired sufficient wisdom to understand their motive, or sufficient magnanimity to forgive; so her universe totters and falls, and with it is shattered her image of John Risca, the Great High Belovedest of her childhood, and the lover of her womanhood. We cannot tell Mr. Locke's story here, even had we the skill to accomplish worthily such a task; nor can we dwell upon Unity, a greater woman than Stella Maris; nor upon Walter Herold, who is the closest to Stella Maris in fancy and understanding; nor upon Louisa Risca, the devil wife of John's passion, a veritable incarnation of evil—suffice that after trial and strife and storm came peace for John and happiness for Herold and Stella. "Don't worry about me" (John said). "I'm at peace with myself for the first time for years. There's lots of happiness in the world left." He smiled again. "Enough for the three of us—and for Unity." He left them and went to bed in the room which Stella Maris had furnished for him long ago, and fell into the sleep of the man who has found rest at last in the calm and certain knowledge of spiritual things. Unity had not died in vain. And Stella Maris, sitting once more by Herold's side in the wide bay of the window, and talking with him in a hushed voice of the wondrous things that had come to pass, knew that John Risca had spoken a great truth. It had been God's will that so should the terrible splendour of the world be made manifest.

The Ambassador, by William Wriothesley. (William Heinemann.)

THERE is a great deal of clever talk in this novel; it bubbles over with the doings of life ambassadorial, and introduces us to a wide circle of quite interesting, if not always creditable, individuals. Angelica, the wife of the British Ambassador at Berlin, has a step-daughter whom she would like to see married. It is said that the daughters of Ambassadors do not marry, and Angelica is determined to disprove the statement, much as she loves Alexandra. A false report credits Alexandra with a considerable fortune, and, on the strength of this, comes Fürst Lichtenfeld, petted, sophisticated, blasé, to woo. Alexandra, enamoured of her Prussian lover, falls into the net in which he himself is also unexpectedly entangled. Opportune discovery, however, of her real position finds Lichtenfeld faced with the necessity to forego his fancy and make haste to cover as well as may be an abrupt retreat. The author now attempts to patch up some sort of an understanding between the Ambassador's life-long admirer, Ronney, and the disconsolate Alexandra; this not proving workable—though Ronney might well have taken Alexandra's liking—little Paul, the Ambassador's son, is sacrificed to provide the heroine with an opportunity to mother something, and the story peters out to a distinctly unsatisfactory end.

Patricia Plays a Part, by Mabel Barnes-Grundy. (Hutchinson.)

WHEN an heiress has had seven proposals of marriage, none of them, it would appear, disinterested expressions of affection, she may be pardoned for allowing herself to become the victim of a slight *ennui* and a desire to escape from a position that has in it all the elements of disillusion. Patricia Hastings, the heiress in question, eager to figure in another role, determines upon a masquerade; with this object in view she chooses Mentone as the scene of anticipated adventures. As a somewhat impecunious young woman she falls in with David Wroxham, an artist of no mean fame, who also travels *incognito*. The pair, as will be quickly surmised, are attracted by each other, the story, from their meeting, taking on the character of a quite amusing and sympathetic love-story. Mrs. Barnes-Grundy is a writer with a facile imagination and a ready humour; she lays no great tax on your credulity, and you can spend an enjoyable hour or so with her Patricia.

Studies in Love and in Terror, by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. (Methuen.)
OF these five stories the two best would appear to be "Price of Admiralty" and "The Child." In the former, a very clever piece of analysis, Jacques de

Wissant, the Mayor of Falaise, is a study of a jealous husband in whom the passionate desire to guard his own and his wife's good name is a lever that brings into action forces that, had they been discovered, must have amazed even the most callous of those among whom he moved. With acute penetration Mrs. Belloc Lowndes delves for the hidden motives that animate this the most convincing of the several studies that she gives us. In "The Child" her work is more sympathetic, if less dramatic and losing by the fact that the end is obvious from the start. Mrs. Belloc Lowndes is a writer with a very agreeable style; even when she allows herself to strike a sensational note she does so in a fashion that robs her intention of its offence. If these stories are not the best work she has done, they are at least extremely interesting.

BOHN'S POPULAR LIBRARY.

THERE is something almost historical in the re-issue this year of a new edition of this famous library. It owed its inception to the energy of Henry George Bohn, who was born in 1796 and lived till 1884. He was the son of a Westphalian who had married a Scotch lady and settled in London as a second-hand bookseller the year before he was born. He entered his father's business, but not finding his ideas accepted, retired to go into the city. He was, however, induced to return and he remained with him until his marriage in 1831, to Elizabeth Simpkin, only child of William Simpkin of the firm of Simpkin, Marshall and Company. He made very rapid progress and brought out several libraries of one kind and another, such as the "Standard," the "Scientific," the "Antiquarian," the "Illustrated" and the "Philological." He hoped to

found a house of the highest rank, but, unfortunately for that scheme, his sons did not care for business, and went into the Army; in 1864 he sold the stock, copyrights and stereotypes of his "Libraries" for about forty thousand pounds to Messrs. Bell and Daldy, afterwards Messrs. Bell and Sons. It is a selection from these works that has now been issued, and a very good selection it is. Among the books are many classics that are not otherwise available in a cheap form. The books are very well bound. Each of them deserves on its merits to be included in any good library, and the collection thoroughly deserves the high eulogy passed upon it by Thomas Carlyle.

Vegetable Growing Made Easy. by Owen Thomas and George Wythes, and "The Cooking of Vegetables," by Mrs. Frances Keyzer. (COUNTRY LIFE Library.)

"VEGETABLE GROWING MADE EASY" is a practical little book, the use of which will add very greatly to the comfort of the household. The writers are very much at home in their subject, and in addition to giving directions about the most effective means of cultivation, they have interspersed the text with a thousand hints calculated to be useful. They bring to notice many vegetables that were passing out of use, and they also give most useful directions for cultivating such plants as may be grown to supply the table in winter—a time when the old-time gardener despaired of producing any variety. The book is plentifully supplied with pictures of the useful, practical type, and is as good a little handbook for its purpose as could well be devised.

THE PROTECTION OF WILD BIRDS' EGGS.

IN our Correspondence columns to-day Mr. Edmund Selous, the famous naturalist and traveller, makes a very important protest. This is the time of the singing of birds. Migrants that come here to nest have nearly all arrived, and they are rendering the groves vocal with their songs and the hedgerows and banks interesting by reason of the beautiful nests which they secrete in them. It is the time of year when every schoolboy and many grown-up men and women are naturalists. There is indeed no period of the year more charming for those who dwell in the country. Wherever one goes, be it by the highroad made dusty with motors or the footpath leading across cornfields and meadows, by the water-side or on the hills, there are, for those who have the eyes to

discover them, little enterprises of nest-building and hatching and feeding of young going on from dawn till dusk to the accompaniment of a perfect clangour of whistling, chirping and the miscellaneous and indescribable noises produced by birds in the breeding season. Mr. Selous points out that to a certain number the occasion is one for robbery, and there is reason to believe that robbery is done in a very systematic and effective manner. Ostensibly, nesting birds are protected. It is illegal to take either eggs or young. But in spite of this it is well known by naturalists that for years past there have been dealers in these illegitimate products, and that there is a secret tariff and a regular means of supply. It is very common to blame the marauding schoolboy for the destruction of many nests.



H. B. Macpherson

KING OF THE HIGHLANDS.

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In reality, he does very little harm. We have noticed, and probably others have done the same, that the child of to-day is much less destructive in his habits than was his progenitor of twenty or thirty years ago. He is kept more closely to his school tasks, and has lost many of the arts in which his progenitor rejoiced. For example, that of tree-climbing. We remember when village boys were systematically in the habit of climbing the trees in the rookery and collecting the squabs just about this time of the year. Their mothers made rook pie of the young birds, which were esteemed a delicacy. Nowadays the boy has lost the apelike faculty for climbing, and the village women have ceased to regard rook pie as a luxury. And this illustrates very well what happened as far as the boy was concerned. He, unless in a few very exceptional cases, had not the patience and knowledge to work for rare birds, but he kept down those that were common. Probably the birds that suffered most from his depredations were sparrows and finches, thrushes and blackbirds. In the fruit countries no doubt the latter two frequently have their nests destroyed even now; but that is a matter of pounds, shillings and pence. The nest and young are removed, because if the latter were allowed to come to maturity they would destroy the fruit. Fortunately, the owners of private



E. L. Turner. A RARITY OF THE BROADS. Copyright.



T. A. Metcalfe.

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ONE OF A DIMINISHING SPECIES.

gardens can afford to be more tolerant, and there are enough blackbirds and thrushes left every year to populate the whole country-side. But the effect of the Wild Birds Protection Act has been to discourage the village boy from birds'-nesting, and so help to bring about a vast multiplication of birds of the common species; whereas the collector of whom Mr. Selous complains wants only the eggs of those that are rare. And here, again, an important difference must be noted between the vagrant villager and the professional collector. The former did his collecting on a very simple plan of his own. He took an egg from the nest of each new bird that he discovered, blew them with the aid of a needle and strung them like beads on a piece of thread, henceforth to be hung up as an ornament to the cottage. Now the taking of one egg was a very innocent proceeding. It very seldom causes the parent birds to forsake the nest, and probably, if they had as much intelligence as the families of some other bipeds, they would be rather glad that their families were reduced, as this means a decrease in the labour of feeding them. It is far otherwise with the so-called naturalist, whose love of what he thinks science leads him to form a collection of eggs. To him the single egg has no value, and the eggs of common birds are of no value. What he wants are the eggs of very rare birds, and full clutches of them. He will tell you that for scientific purposes stray eggs are practically useless. Many are not content with a clutch, but say that, in order to draw the proper generalisations, they must have series of clutches. Now the man with the egg-case only in rare instances does the gathering himself. He employs agencies up and down the country and, not to put too fine a point upon it, bribes them to do his work. The classes of people to whom he addresses himself are naturally those whose life is led in the open air and who have inducements to observe Nature. Gamekeepers and rabbit-catchers are subjected to severe temptation; so are working foresters. The eggs of many birds go up to a very considerable figure, and it is by no means unusual for the sum of five pounds to be paid for a clutch. Those who live on the more remote parts of the coast are also assailed by the energetic collector. The coastguards and fishermen are very often applied to. Anyone may find this out for himself if he will get into conversation with some of the boatmen on the more remote coasts of Great Britain. What has struck the writer is that a simple and apparently ignorant peasant will tell you the price to a penny of every rare egg that can be procured in his district. Of course, one does not say that all coastguardsmen or all fishermen or all gamekeepers do this. Many, indeed the vast majority of them, are incapable of collecting eggs. They do not know enough of the habits of the birds, nor do they possess that quality of unwearying patience which is the first essential to success. But the shame of it is that these men are bribed

to break the law; and we do not think that very much blame is attached to them if they succumb to temptation. Most of them work for small wages, and a sum that may vary from five shillings to five pounds represents an important addition to their resources.

The practical question that arises is how to put a stop to practices of this kind. Unluckily the local policeman, estimable and conscientious as he may be in many respects, is not easily stirred up to vigilance in the care of small birds. He sees no disturbance of property, no broken bones, and none of

the collection is useful, if not absolutely necessary, and, indeed, it is of great consequence that in the local museums there should be specimens of every nest, every bird and every egg found in the locality, as that would have a wholesome educative effect. But when such a collection is once made the work is done and there need be no other interference. The man of science, too, must have his material; but he also is finite in his demands. The worst offender of all is the collector for commercial purposes, and to get at him it would be necessary



Smith Whiting.

SAFE FROM THE EGG COLLECTOR.

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the other tokens by which he is accustomed to recognise a breach of the law's majesty. Perhaps the best way to attain the object in view would be to make the possession of collections of eggs illegal unless an absolutely satisfactory account could be given of the manner in which they were acquired. It is best to recognise frankly that for museum and kindred work

to make him either account for every egg found in his possession or pay an appropriate penalty. A similar method might be applied to those found in possession of young birds. For they are dealt in also. You can get your jay and your magpie and your raven as of yore, only at about three times the old price because of the Wild Bird Protection Act.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO DEFEAT THE EGG COLLECTOR.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The anecdote contained on page 372 in the first of the interesting series of "Peregrine" articles now appearing in your columns, telling how certain collectors were induced to take hen's eggs masquerading as those of the bird in question, is very amusing, as well as entirely satisfactory to those who are opposed to collecting. Since, however, the stratagems of collectors, when successful, no doubt appeal equally to all their *confrères*, the question arises as to how far the employment of means of this nature is justifiable upon either side. I think it must be agreed that where the object is in itself an evil one, then, *a fortiori*, all measures to attain it which are founded on deception, even in its milder forms, are also indefensible, as, e.g., where one man deceives another as part of a scheme of robbery. But does the same law hold good in the contrary case—an instance of which would be the prevention of said robbery by a third party through similar means? Surely not, for here the moral obligation to act with good faith in dealing with one's fellow-men is controlled by a still higher one, which urges us imperatively to prevent any crime by and through which one's fellow-man suffers. Few, I suppose, will challenge this reasoning as applied to the case stated; but should one be prepared to apply it, not only as against burglars in the ordinary sense, but also against the robbers of birds' eggs? Now, although the destruction of human property is a great evil, yet the destruction of birds must, by any bird-lover (and, indeed, by any right-feeling and intelligent person) be held a far greater one. This affects life, not mere property; and not individual life merely, but specific life—causes the perishing of species which, when once gone, can never be brought back. What does it matter, in comparison, if even a few householders are shot? Householders are a very "dominant species," not in the least likely to become extinct. Could not a certain number of them be better spared than all eagles from all mountains and

all coasts? Which would make the greater permanent dearth in the world? All mankind should be interested in the preservation of birds (by the disappearance of which science would lose one of her provinces), and it is of far more moment, surely, to help in this good work than to consider the feelings of those who, by thwarting it, act in opposition to the highest considerations and care nothing whatever for the feelings of those who feel more rightly in this matter than they do. It does not, unfortunately, matter how individually moderate any bird's-egg collector may be, for it is as one—as a private in a great, huge army of destroyers—that he adds his contribution, big or little, to the enormous sum total of destruction; the evil is cumulative. However admirable collectors, in other respects, may be (and I, for one, set no limits to the possibilities here involved), yet scarcity, rarity and ultimate disappearance must always dog their footsteps, since a bird, at any stage of its being, is first collected *until* it is rare, and then *because* it is rare. The only way to lessen this great, this terribly great and crying evil is by countermining and striving against it; and therefore, I hold, it is right—indeed, more than right, a clear duty—for anyone who sees such destruction in its true light to use all means of lessening it short of such as are actually criminal. Among these latter I cannot possibly include indelible pencils (as advocated by the author of the articles in question), which, by leaving marks on the eggshell not to be rubbed off without breaking it, make the "specimen" of no use or interest even to the collector—it need hardly be said that in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand it is of none to all mankind else (including "science"), even with no marks but its own. Surely there is nothing wrong here. Bombs, indeed, I would not advocate, even if they could be properly timed and would not defeat their own end; but any man's conscience, I think, might allow him the use of these pencils—far less indelible, however effectively so, than the guilt which it is hoped they may lessen, and which has alone forced this use of them on tender but too

long-suffering consciences. There is, indeed, something peculiarly attractive in the idea of putting a mark of salvation, as it were, upon a young bird's opening life, so as to cause its would-be destroyers to pass by without bringing it to naught. This is a thing, good and right in itself, a harmless, nay, a distinctly moral means beautifully conceived to a most high end—the saving from perishing of life, with all its beauty and wonder, though not quite perfect, since the possible effects, the *primeros movimientos*, of baffled rage have to be risked. Still, to some extent, let us hope that it will act as a sort of ornithological passover. Only collectors, I fancy, could see anything wrong in such a means to such an end; but one doesn't consult the wolves about the flock.

It may, of course, be said by collectors that to advocate such methods as these is to approve the doctrine that the end justifies the means. But who, it may be asked, does not to some extent follow this principle, and would not "chaos be come again" if no one did? The real question lies in the degree to which it is rightly applicable, and that is for every man's private judgment. Few can use this plea without laying themselves open to counter attack, and among these few—if there be any—collectors are certainly not numbered, since in their own practice they carry out and exemplify the doctrine to a quite startling degree, as may be easily shown. For in blood-collecting destruction is the means, not the end, and that means stands in sore need of justification, since, in itself, it is evil. Clearly, then, it can only be justified by some end (great and glorious!) for which it is done, and the scientific collector, at any rate (at his best), is forced so to justify it for his conscience sake. He must somehow seek to excuse himself for constantly diminishing the life on this earth, which, having a brain, he cannot think good, and, being moral, he cannot find pleasure in. One need not consider the booby or mere wicked person. In this matter, therefore, collectors stand quite out of court, as they also do when accusing anyone who arraigns their doings of being a "crank," an "enthusiast," a "utopian," and so forth. They seem to think that there is just a small band of absurdly emotional people in the world (to whom you belong) who hold very strange views about collecting, and themselves, as collectors. But if there were not now great numbers who think in this "odd" way, there would be no societies anywhere for the protection of wild birds, no Government measures for the same end, no Plumage Bill in contemplation, in the House. Anyone—any plume-hunter or wearer—has as much right to exterminate birds as collectors have and all of them are helping one another to do it. It is against all of these, and to a large extent against collectors more particularly, that the protection laws have been framed. Their methods of madness—for to destroy the raw material of any study is madness, or worse—already begin to be spoken of as those of "the old school," and are becoming so discredited, nay, hated, that most of them now creep about, hiding their darkness from the light. Though their names be still legion, yet are they a diminishing party; and what we, of the better and rising one, hope and pray is that they may all be extinct before birds are—though that is much to be doubted.—EDMUND SELOUS.

SILVER FIRS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have been much struck by the article in COUNTRY LIFE of April 19th under the heading, "Wild Country Life," by Mr. Seton Gordon, and especially by the paragraph on the silver fir. I have paid much attention to this tree, both here in Wales and in Switzerland, and I can fully corroborate all that your correspondent has written about this lovely conifer, with one exception, in which I differ from him. Mr. Seton Gordon says: "In Great Britain this tree is not seen to advantage, as it suffers from the unfortunate tendency to become double leaved." Hitherto has not, as far as my experience goes, been much used for planting, and I think this is much to be regretted as I believe it is eminently suited to the soil and climate of this country. Growing within a short distance of this house are some of the finest specimens of this tree I have ever seen, forming grand timber and absolutely straight. In one of these plantations I stood with the owner, one on either side of the trunk of one of these silver firs, and with our arms outstretched round it we could not make the points of our fingers meet by two or three feet, and we are, both of us, well over six feet in stature; and though there are a number of these fine trees in the plantation, intermixed with other trees, I do not think there is a single specimen of the silver fir that has double leaders. In this particular plantation I was much struck by the wonderfully luxuriant natural regeneration of this tree, the whole floor of the plantation being covered with its seedlings, while, despite the presence of many common spruce and larch, I could not see a single seedling of either of these species. Curiously, in Switzerland, in the neighbourhood of Montreux, and especially on the hillsides between Chambry and Les Avants, I noticed this same luxuriance of natural regeneration of the silver fir. The seedlings are in thousands, while those of the common spruce are comparatively rare. It was a very rare thing to see any of these trees with double leaders, and I have seen no disease worth speaking of in any of the mature trees of this species, either in this country or



"FROSTY, BUT KINDLY."

abroad. I believe the silver fir would be much more extensively used for planting in Great Britain were it not for the great sensitiveness of the seedlings and young trees to frost in the early spring, when the young shoots are very likely to be cut down. I have had many promising young trees ruined in this way, and they seldom seem to recover. When the trees are from four to five years of age they appear to be immune from frost, and then make very rapid growth.—C. E. BEADNELL (Major).

"A RELIC OF THE PAST."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—An ancient cresset, illustrated on page 614 of your last issue, was probably used either for warming or fumigation, possibly both, but not, as your correspondent suggests, for the purpose of a beacon. The shape of its container militates against the use of this device for quick and visible combustion; neither could it be easily seen above an ordinary parapet. Burial within the church was frequent. In a little book now before me, written in 1721, against this "Indecent and Dangerous" custom, I find a memorandum sent from the College of Physicians Anno 1665, advising "That in Time of Pestilence they should not bury in Churches, and that Churches should be first *smoked* before the Congregations assemble." It is possible your correspondent shows us this rarer article, a fumigator for church use; for I suppose general prescriptions were sometimes followed, especially when one of the sharper senses was assailed by plague, or, indeed, other remains.—W. DE C. PRIDEAUX.

NOT YET PAST ENJOYING A DAY'S WORK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed is a photograph of an old man of eighty-three, whom I found hedging one afternoon. He is hale and hearty, and quite capable of doing the work and enjoying it, as is shown by the smile on his face. He and a brother of his, who is eighty-six, are familiar figures to the inhabitants of Fylingdales, chatting or walking together. I think the photograph of the old hedger might interest some of your readers.—R. M. STORM.

YORKSHIRE FIRE-PLACE.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—Your correspondent's letter on old fire-places and ovens has interested me much. I am not fifty, but have often helped bake bread in an oven such as he describes. In my old home, a large farmhouse in the South of England, held by us for generations, was a big back kitchen with open hearth and chimney corner and a huge brick oven. On baking days two faggots were placed in it and burnt to embers, which were then evenly spread over the floor with a long stout stick—a ruckser, I remember it was called. When a certain brick in the centre of the

oven dome glowed white, the embers were raked out with a long hoe-like instrument, and the loaves of bread—how we loved to help cook, mix and knead them—placed inside the oven on a long wooden shovel (the peel) and the door shut. After one and a-half hours the door was opened and the loaves, with delicious, crisp, brown crust, taken out on the peel and placed on the long dresser to cool. In my youth every farm cottage had its brick oven in which the gleaning bread was baked. Gleaning in wheat harvest was then a serious business, the farmers always thrashed the labourer's wife's gleaned wheat when they thrashed their own stacks, and the wood, old wattle hurdles or faggots from the hedgerows, was, like beer and sometimes milk, a farm-hand's perquisite. The beer was brewed by old Joe—he was also the thatcher—in our own brew-house behind the kitchen. As children we loved to climb among the vats and coolers and peer into the boilers; still better did we enjoy a ride to the harvest-field in the cart full of little wooden kegs of beer for the reapers. Farm labourers were, many of them, old friends working for the same farmer families generation after generation, expecting and receiving a consideration not given in these days of short service.—L. P.

A GAELIC PROVERB.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Through the kindness of a gentleman who rented this shooting in the season of 1910 I have been receiving several of the leading papers on sport, and not later than ten days ago the gentleman referred to sent me COUNTRY LIFE. Immediately any of these papers arrive the first thing I do is to turn up any article which may be connected with sport. In your paper, which is dated March 29th, I noticed an article referring to the age of "Red deer" and I fear you have been wrongly informed as to the accuracy of the Gaelic proverb which is mentioned. Being of the Gaelic-speaking race I have times and again heard my parents and other old people repeat this proverb, and instead of being thrice—as put down in your paper—it is twice the age of a dog, the age of a horse, and so on, and I think you will find this calculation to be pretty nearly correct in most cases, but no hard-and-fast rule can be made, as so much depends on

circumstances. Taking it roughly, a dog's age would be fifteen years to twenty years under fair treatment; the age of a horse would be thirty years to forty years, and doubled accordingly to make up the different ages, but as I have already stated, so much depends on the animals having their natural freedom. I should say the eagle has the best chance. As to the oak tree, I am of opinion that a great deal depends on the nature of the soil, where it exists, and also as to how it may be exposed. I am not going to argue on the age of deer question, although I spend a part of my time among them, but what faith I have goes to support the old Gaelic proverb. But in those days, as far as I can gather from old history, red deer were not confined to certain parts as they are to-day, and I have an idea that one of the most extensive forests in the Highlands at the present time may carry a larger stock of deer than the whole of the Highlands did at the time this proverb was composed. Now I have not had your paper since, so that I do not know whether the statement has been corrected, but my purpose for writing is to point out that such articles are misleading to all readers

of your paper, especially those who are interested in sporting matters, and if you think this letter should be of any benefit to your readers you are at liberty to place it before them.—C. MACPHERSON.



A WEARY TRAVELLER.

in this neighbourhood on Tuesday, April 22nd, a somewhat early date for the arrival of this migrant. A summer or two ago, two pairs of these birds bred in this neighbourhood, which is only some seventeen miles from your office.—GRACE KEARTON, Caterham Valley.

A STILE THAT NEED NOT BE CLIMBED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph is of an automatic stile I came across while cycling in Cheshire. In order to pass through, the two centre-pieces are drawn apart, and immediately they are released they are automatically brought together by means of a spring concealed at the bottom, thus making it unnecessary for

anyone to climb, but at the same time preventing cattle from straying.—C. HELSBY.

INTELLIGENCE OF DOMESTIC FOWLS.

TO THE EDITOR. SIR,—People who keep poultry do so for utility or profit, and therefore get rid of all their old birds; as a consequence they regard fowls as being extremely stupid creatures. Poultry are very slow in their mental development, and I believe that for this reason the few individuals who devote themselves to teaching hens to perform tricks always select old birds for the purpose. In the fowl-



THE NUT-CRACKER STILE.

yard of a neighbour of mine there is an old Plymouth Rock hen which displays a good deal of natural intelligence. She is about nine years old, and consequently portly of form and solemn in movement. There are several combined coops and runs for hens and their broods, and the old Plymouth Rock greatly appreciates the special food provided for the chicks. In order to get at the coveted delicacy she has more than once scraped a hole under the edge of a run so as to get her head inside. So persistent has her digging been that on one or two occasions the chickens have got out through the hole made. There are numbers of rats in the fowl-yard, and so a couple of large box traps are kept constantly set. The same old hen often sets off a trap by pecking at the wire catch on the top until the door falls, and then picks out any of the grain put as bait

that she can reach through the wire-netting which forms the end of the trap. Never once has she been so unwise as to put her head in at the door while the trap is set, and she evidently regards the raised door as dangerous, from the way she always takes pains to make it drop before she tries for the corn. I was one day witness to the summary ejection of a cat which had entered the hen-house. I heard a great row going on inside, and suddenly out of the hen hole in the door shot a cat closely pursued by several angry hens, our old Plymouth friend foremost among them. I think these little incidents go to show that when fowls have attained a certain age they are by no means deficient in intelligence. As an instance of the stupidity of the young hens in the same yard I have constantly been besieged by a clamorous crowd when entering the yard at about feeding-time. I have never fed these fowls, and one would expect them to recognise the people who are in the habit of giving them their corn. Evidently they are unable to distinguish between different persons.—FLEUR-DE-LYS.

HAWKING RABBITS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of a trained goshawk after a successful flight at a rabbit, the rabbit, of course, having been quickly killed by the falconer before the photograph was taken. It shows how a well-trained hawk holds her quarry, with one foot on the head and the other over the shoulder; otherwise a strong rabbit is not stopped, and will carry the hawk on his back, either bolting into a burrow with the hawk still holding on or jump and kick himself free. This is a Norwegian goshawk, and has caught many rabbits, forty-five hares, several moorhens and one wild duck.—C. F. McNIVEN.



THE GOSHAWK'S METHOD OF HOLDING A RABBIT.

BOLDNESS OF A HAWK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was amazed at the boldness shown by a hawk, a few days ago, in an attempt to capture one of my little chickens. The chickens are kept in an out-of-door brooder which has adjoining it a run, or little yard, made of wire-netting of small mesh. The run is about six feet long, three and a-half feet wide and fifteen inches high, the top being completely covered by the wire-netting with the exception of a hand-hole at one end, made so that one may reach through it and open and shut the door of the brooder, giving access to the run. The hand-hole is, roughly, rectangular, and measures seven inches by five inches. On the occasion in question the reckless hawk passed through the aperture described above and was surprised in the act of murdering a chicken at the opposite end of the run. The hawk's boldness in thus climbing into a cage through a small opening is made the more striking by the fact that the chicken-brooder is not more than forty feet from my house. The hawk measured sixteen and a-half inches in length and thirty inches in extent, and appeared to be a Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter Cooperii*).—REGINALD M. JOHNSON.

A GREAT SCARCITY OF QUEEN WASPS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Last year, at the end of April, one could scarcely walk along a high-banked country lane on a sunny morning without seeing three or four queen wasps in

each hundred yards, and everyone prognosticated a veritable plague of wasps later in the year. But evidently the wet August was too much for them, and large numbers of nests must have been drowned out. So far, this spring, I have not met with a single queen wasp, and nearly every countryman of whom I have enquired whether he has seen any replies "No." It would be interesting to know whether a similar state of things prevails in other parts of the Kingdom. The ordinary bumble-bee is unusually prevalent this spring, so it would appear that wasps are the more delicate insect of the two.—ELDRED WALKER.

THE LURE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE,"]

SIR,—During the third week of April a friend and I set out early one morning with our cameras and gear, intending to have a good long day in the country, for some days previously we had found two good nests, one of plover with four eggs, and one of snipe, also with four eggs. Our intention was to "lay up" in concealment and photograph the birds on their nests; while one of us was doing the plover the other could be doing the snipe. Such was our arrangement, to make the most of the day's outing; but when we arrived at the locality, great was our disappointment to find both the nests had been robbed by some contemptible egg-collector. Apart from the loss of time and wasted labour, our disgust was the greater from knowing, by previous observation, that both nests were just about ready for "hatching out"; the eggs would thus be quite useless as "specimens." If we could have met that egg-collector just then, he would certainly have collected more "beautiful markings," in a shorter space of time, than ever he had done before in his life! Our arrangements being so completely upset, and knowing of nothing else thereabouts "worth while," we decided to take things easy, for the day turned out one of those rare exceptions for April—an absolutely glorious sunny day, when everything in Nature seems determined to come forth and cast off the last remaining fetters of the winter's gloom. It was while sauntering idly about the fields I saw a partridge in the grass some distance from me, apparently sitting hard. Quietly withdrawing, I signalled to my chum that I had "found," and when he reached me and I pointed out the bird to him, both of us agreed it would make a capital picture, if only we could get it. Quite impossible, I was afraid, with no concealment and a half-plate camera and tripod; but the chum decided to have a try and stalk up to it, so unpacked his camera and commenced operations. For myself, I sat down in some bushes and smoked while watching him, fully expecting every moment as he got nearer to see the bird fly off the nest. He must have been stalking for quite half-an-hour, when I was astonished to see he had got within about eight yards and had exposed two or three plates on the bird. When I realised there were such remarkable possibilities, I quickly unpacked my camera and followed up from another direction, thinking all the time we had come across a decidedly unusual specimen of a partridge. Getting within about four yards, I exposed a plate (see illustration) and then had a good look at the bird and realised the awful truth—it was as dead as Queen Anne! When I told



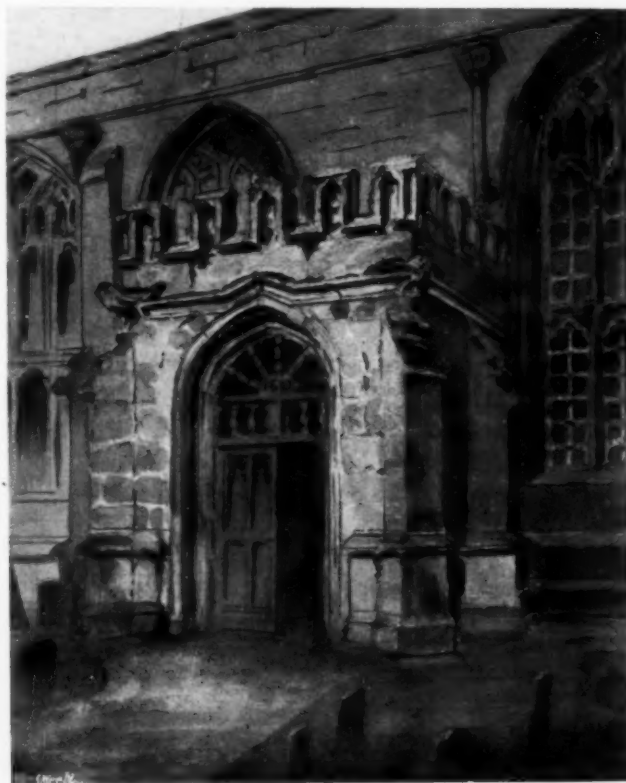
THE PARTRIDGE THAT APPEARED TO BE SITTING.

my chum he could not believe me, but made a frantic grab at the bird, picked it up and held it for, perhaps, a second or so. As he realised all his lost labour he stood with the bird in his hand and looked at me as if he would clearly have liked to kick me; certainly I wanted to kick him, then both of us burst out laughing, for the joke was really too irresistible, in spite of the disappointment. Neither of us is an amateur ornithologist exactly, or usually remiss in observation, but after this "notable" achievement we had not an atom of conceit left in us! After we had put our cameras down we lifted the partridge up to solve the "mystery," if possible; however, there was no sign of a nest; the bird seemed quite plump and healthy and uninjured, and only a post-mortem examination could have revealed the true cause of death. Apparently the bird had dropped from flight, settled down and stiffened. The absolutely life-like pose of the bird is shown in the illustration (from the only plate I exposed) just as we found it, and before it had been touched or molested in any way.—A. PILKINGTON.

MAIDS MORETON CHURCH, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE,"]

SIR,—The little-known but interesting Church of Maids Moreton is within two miles of the town of Buckingham. The name of Moreton is derived from its locality, which was at one time a moor, and the prefix from the circumstance that two pious maidens of an ancient family named Plover, who held land here in the reign of Edward I., and in whom the patronage of the living was vested from the reign of Henry II. until that of Henry VI., were founders of the church. In many of its details the architecture of the church is unique and of considerable interest. It was built about the year 1450,



THE NORTH PORCH.



THE WEST PORCH.

but the north and west porches (as will be seen by the illustrations) do not belong to that date. Lipscomb, writing of the north porch, was evidently in doubt about the time of its building. It certainly shows evidence that it was not built at the same period as the church; it has been placed against the old work and covers some of the mouldings of the windows. On the outer oak door of this porch is the date 1637, and this is probably that of the erection of both porches. By close examination of the west porch it will be seen that the original upper stones of the doorway have been removed, and altered, to receive the fantracery and battlements which constitute a porch. This canopied tracery was probably designed by an architect anxious that his work should assimilate or harmonise with that of the church. The battlements are very large and out of proportion; their inner recessed work forms semi-circular niches, and the whole has the appearance of being built in the time of Charles I. The general effect is pleasing and picturesque, and more satisfactory than the usual classic porch of that period would be. In 1603 the rector was George Bute. A son of his, born November 23rd, 1607, became Chief Physician to King Charles I. and afterwards to Oliver Cromwell and King Charles II. It may be conjectured that this eminent man, whose life was so much connected with Maids Moreton, was the donor of the interesting additions to the church.—S. A.

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